1
sanami matoh
BY THE SWORD
From the Creator of FAKE

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13+

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SWORD BY THE

sanami matoh presents

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妖

NOT GOOD!
THIS SWORD AIN'T GONNA LAST...
CHK
Aaaaa...
8A-GRACK!!
Hrargh!
SKSH SKSH
ka-knk
YOU SONOFA!
SKSH
GLARE
8A-KOOM!

HUGH
WRIGGLE
MAN! WHAT A WASTE OF MY TIME!
AUUGH
Oh Jump
BLEHH!
SHIMMER
SWOOSH
EH?
HEY! WHAT DID YOU JUST DO WITH THE DEMON ORB?
I TOLD MY DADDY WHAT YOU DONE. YOU BEST GET READY. MY DADDY'S STRONG!
WEHEHEH
AND SOON, HE'S GONNA GET HIMSELF THE MOEGI. THEN HE'S GONNA BE EVEN STRONGER!

BWORRRR
SKLPSH!
Wha?!
K-CRKK

HAND OVER THAT SWORD!
GIVE IT HERE, GIRL!
DASH!
AIEE!
TUG
GLARE
BWOMP
BWSSH
?!
BLGARGH!
KRKK

I-IN BUNGO, THERE'S A GIRL NAMED KAEDE. SHE SAID SHE HAS IT.
WAAAAAA
I AIN'T GONNA TELL YOU!
YOU KNOW WHERE THE MOEGI IS? WHERE?!
GRARR!
skirsh
LOOK, THAT'S ALL I KNOW! H...HELP ME!
I told you everything!
Get that sword outta me!
KAEDE, HUH?
COME BACK HERE, YOU LITTLE BRAT!
ONE MONTH LATER SAIKAI ROAD, BUNGO
Buzen
Bungo
Hyuga
NOOO...
SHUT YOUR TRAP!
POW!

THIS DOES NOT BELONG TO YOU!
THMP
KAEDE, THE SUN'S SETTING. THERE'S AN OLD TEMPLE DOWN THE ROAD...
GO THERE.
YOU WANT ME TO HIDE IN A TEMPLE?
CORRECT.
OKAY...
thp
I'LL REMEMBER THIS!

COME TO THINK OF IT, I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THIS GIRL KAEDE LOOKS LIKE.
I SHOULD'VE FORCED THAT STUPID FROG-BOY TO TELL ME.
PANG!
HM?
UGH...
I'M EXHAUSTED!
I'VE BEEN WALKIN' AROUND BUNGO FOR THREE WHOLE DAYS, AND I STILL HAVEN'T FOUND ANYTHING!
WHERE THE HECK AM I?
SIGH...
Huff
Sksk
A TEMPLE? THIS DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS?

Waugh!
WAAAUGH!
SKSSSH
HEY! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE
DOING?
BWOOSH!
BUT SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT.
IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S NOT BEING USED...
IT FEELS KIND OF... SINISTER.
SKSH
?!

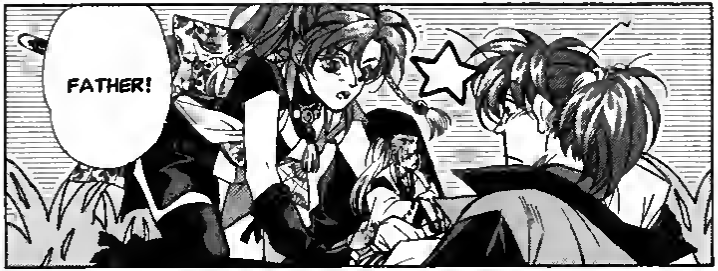
WHA...?

ARE YOU AFTER THE MOEGI, TOO?

GLARE
YOU'RE A KARININ, AREN'T YOU?!

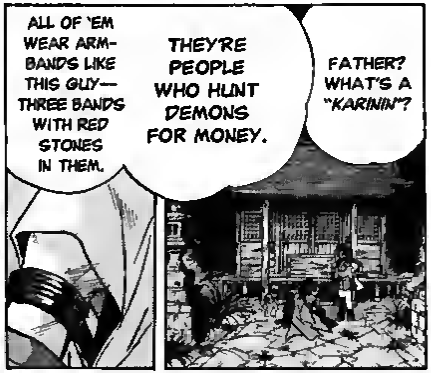
WAIT A MINUTE—! THIS GIRL'S GOT A SWORD, WHICH MEANS...

ARE YOU... KAEDE?!


FATHER!

DON'T GO NEAR THE KARININ. OUT OF ALL HUMANS, THEY'RE THE ONES YOU CAN TRUST THE LEAST.
LISTEN UP, KAEDE.

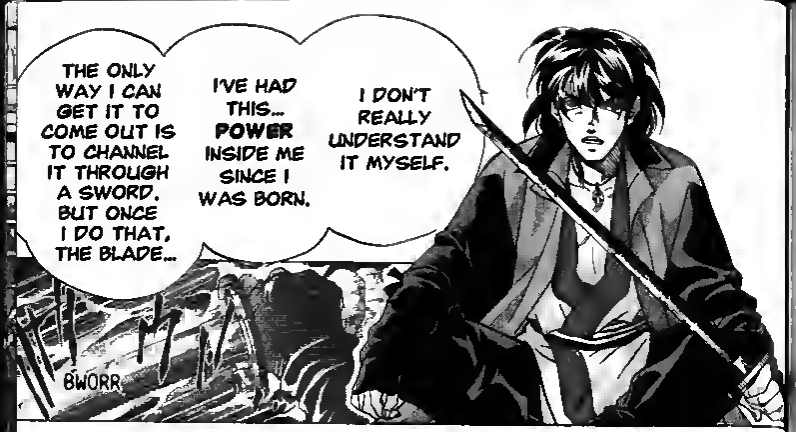
OF COURSE I'M SMALL!
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?
UH...IS IT JUST ME, OR ARE YOU REALLY SMALL?


ALL OF 'EM WEAR ARM-BANDS LIKE THIS GUY—THREE BANDS WITH RED STONES IN THEM.
THEY'RE PEOPLE WHO HUNT DEMONS FOR MONEY.
FATHER? WHAT'S A "KARININ"?

HEY! DON'T JUST IGNORE ME!
"CALLED?" OH, YOU MEAN MY NAME?
WHAT ARE YOU CALLED?

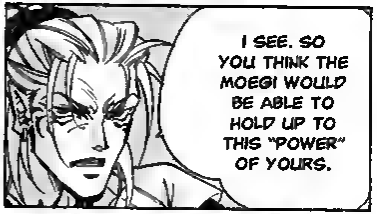
I HEARD THAT A LONG, LONG TIME AGO,
THERE WAS A SWORD-SMITH WHO WAS HALF-MAN, HALF-DEMON.
HE GATHERED A HUNDRED AND ONE OF THE DEMON ORBS AND FORGED A SWORD-- THE MOEGI.
UM

† APPARENTLY FAMOUS IN KARININ CIRCLES Δ


I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND IT MYSELF.
I'VE HAD THIS... POWER INSIDE ME SINCE I WAS BORN.
THE ONLY WAY I CAN GET IT TO COME OUT IS TO CHANNEL IT THROUGH A SWORD. BUT ONCE I DO THAT, THE BLADE...
BWORR

ASAGI? ARE YOU "THE ONE WHO WILL BREAK THE SEAL"?
HUH? THE SEAL?
SHUT UP, KAEDE!
CHK

crumble
ENDS UP LIKE THIS.


I SEE. SO YOU THINK THE MOEGI WOULD BE ABLE TO HOLD UP TO THIS "POWER" OF YOURS.

NO! I'M NOT GONNA SHUT UP!!
SNAP
BANG

I KNEW THAT'S WHAT YOU'D BE AFTER.
JUST LIKE ALL THE OTHER MEN AND DEMONS...
HMPH

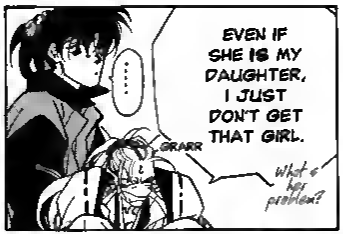
CHK

SSH

YEAH. WHOEVER GETS HIS HANDS ON THIS SWORD GAINS A HUNDRED AND ONE DEMONIC POWERS.

I USE MY POWER TO KILL MONSTERS.
HM. I DON'T SENSE ANY DEMONIC POWER COMIN' FROM YOU.
NO, NOT DEMONIC POWER.

ASAGI! YOUR SWORD'S ALL WORN DOWN.
BUT IT WAS BRAND NEW JUST TEN DAYS AGO...

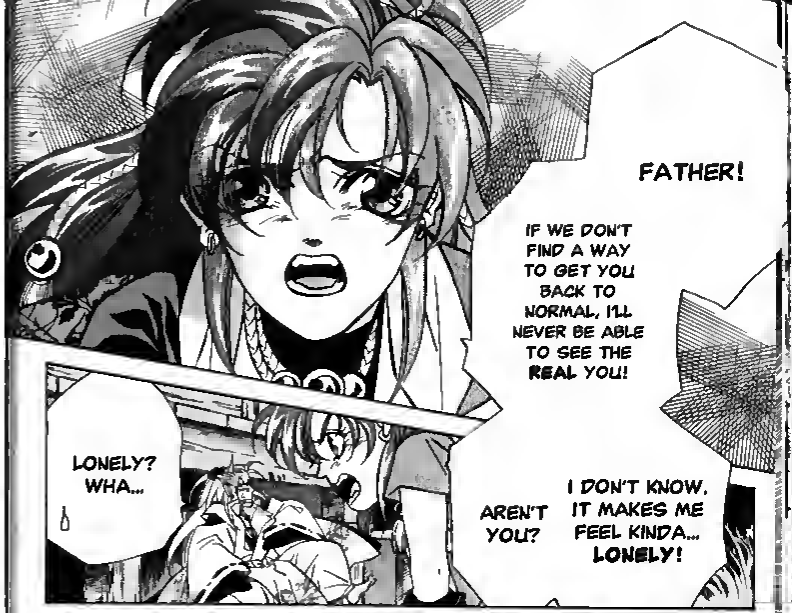

EVEN IF SHE IS MY DAUGHTER, I JUST DON'T GET THAT GIRL.
GRARR
What's her problem?

CREAK

ARE YOU CRYING?

ASAGI...

OH
I GET HUNGRY WHEN I CRY
I'M EATING, BECAUSE I'M HUNGRY.


FATHER!
IF WE DON'T FIND A WAY TO GET YOU BACK TO NORMAL, I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO SEE THE REAL YOU!
I DON'T KNOW. IT MAKES ME FEEL KINDA... LONELY!
AREN'T YOU?
LONELY? WHA...

SOB

'COURSE I AIN'T LONELY.
HMPH!

SLAM
TTING

I... I HATE YOU!!
W...IGHT!

SO IT REALLY IS IMPOSSIBLE?
YEAH, I GUESS NOT...
HE CAN'T HUG ME WHEN HE'S SO SMALL!
HEY! I DON'T LOOK SO SAD.
YEAH, AT LEAST WITH THE WAY HE IS NOW, I MEAN.
YEAH. MY JOB REQUIRES A LOT OF TRAVEL.
I'LL ASK AROUND ON THE WAY.
REALLY?
I'LL FIND THE ONE WHO WILL BREAK THE SEAL AND LET YOU MEET YOUR REAL FATHER.
THWUMP
Whe-?! HEY!
OKAY. IT'S A PROMISE.
TOGETHER, HUH?
TAKE ME WITH YOU! WE'LL SEARCH TOGETHER! C'MON, PROMISE ME, ASAGI!

MY FATHER IS SEALED INSIDE THE MOEGI.
MY GRAND-FATHER TOLD ME THAT
AND YOUR "REAL" FATHER?
WHAT DID YOU MEAN ABOUT THAT SEAL,
AND UNLESS THE SEAL IS BROKEN, THE MOEGI CAN'T BE DRAWN.
THE ONE CHOSEN BY THE VERY HUMAN WHO SEALED MY FATHER A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.
HE ALSO SAID THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN WHO CAN FREE HIM--
I'D HAVE HIM GIVE ME A BIG HUG!
'COURSE NOT!
I'M ONLY EIGHTEEN.
ARE YOU A HUNDRED YEARS OLD, ASAGI?
THEN I GUESS IT'S NOT YOU...
IF YOUR FATHER GOES BACK TO NORMAL, WHAT WOULD YOU DO THEN?
WELL...

crkk
BOOM
BOOM
WHAT'S THAT?!
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
snap
CRUNK
BOOM
CRUNK
KA-SMASH

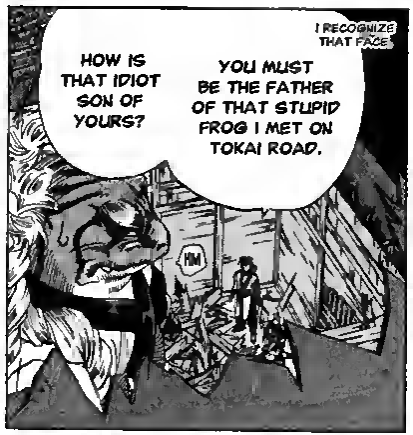
YOU'RE SUCH A NICE GUY

IF YOU'RE A KARININ, DON'T YOU SENSE...
BY THE WAY, ASAGI--
THP

THE DEMONIC AURA AROUND HERE?

HEY! DON'T GO THINKIN' YOU CAN JUST TAKE HER FOR YOURSELF!
And watch that hand!
OOPS!
?

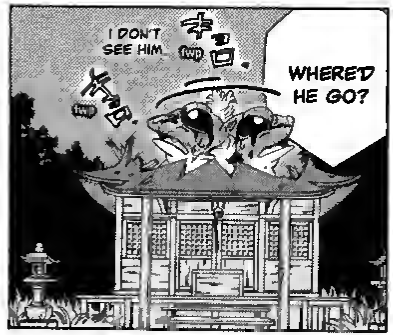
SHUT UP!!
DON'T CALL US IDIOTS!
WOMP!!

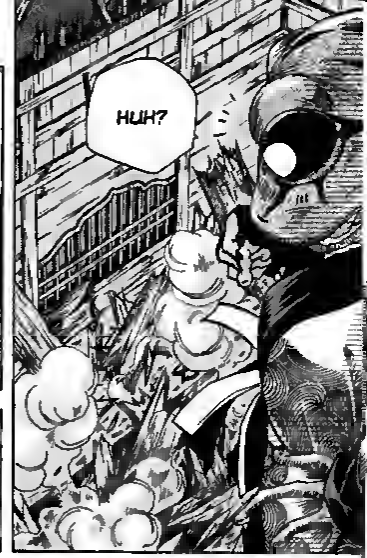

I RECOGNIZE THAT FACE!
HOW IS THAT IDIOT SON OF YOURS?
YOU MUST BE THE FATHER OF THAT STUPID FROG I MET ON TOKAI ROAD.
HM

I DON'T EVEN HAVE LEGS YET!
HOW COME?
SON
THANKS TO YOU, MY SON'S GOTTA START ALL OVER FROM A TADPOLE!

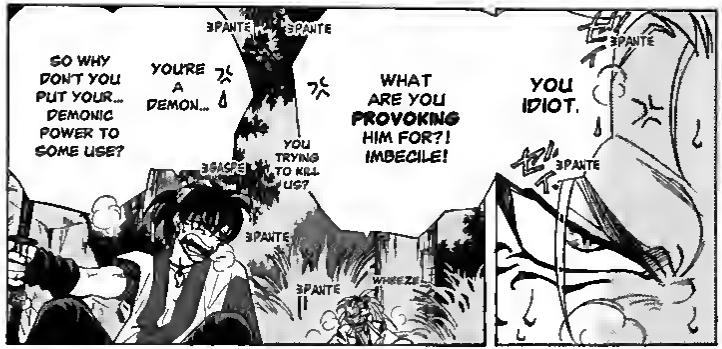
LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON.
GOOD. RAISE HIM RIGHT THIS TIME. HE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD MUCH OF A CHANCE AS SUCH A LOSER ANYWAY, RIGHT?
Ha Ha Ha
SNAP

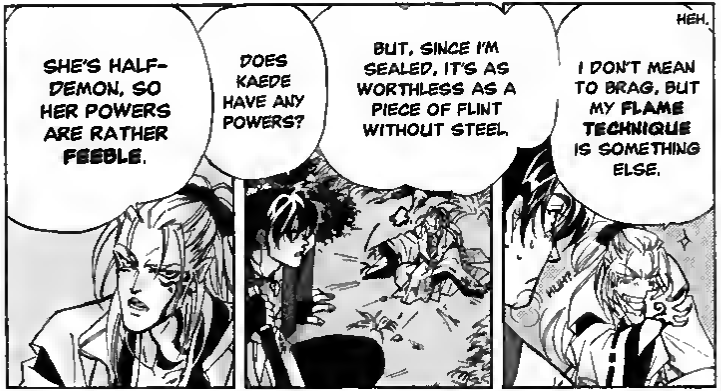
I SMELL THAT ASAGI GUY.
HOW DARE YOU HUNT MY SON?!
I'LL MAKE YOU PAY!!
OH!
HIS SON?!
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
COUGH
COUGH


I DON'T SEE HIM.
WHERE'D HE GO?


HUH?

.....


SO WHY DON'T YOU PUT YOUR... DEMONIC POWER TO SOME USE?
YOU'RE A DEMON...
YOU TRYING TO KILL US?
WHAT ARE YOU PROVOKING HIM FOR?! IMBECILE!
YOU IDIOT.
3PANTE
3GASP3
WHEEZE


SHE'S HALF-DEMON, SO HER POWERS ARE RATHER FEEBLE.
DOES KAEDE HAVE ANY POWERS?
BUT, SINCE I'M SEALED, IT'S AS WORTHLESS AS A PIECE OF FLINT WITHOUT STEEL.
HEH.
I DON'T MEAN TO BRAG, BUT MY FLAME TECHNIQUE IS SOMETHING ELSE.
HUH?

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?
YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THAT?
NO. JUST A BIT SURPRISED.
IS THAT RIGHT?
SO HER MOTHER'S A HUMAN THEN.

GIVE UP.
I DON'T THINK SO. APPARENTLY ONLY MY SISTER'S CHILD CAN DRAW IT.

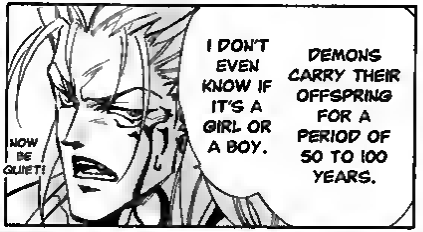
REALLY? YOUR SISTER'S...

A STUPID FROG LIKE THAT WOULD BE A PIECE OF CAKE.
IF ONLY I COULD DRAW THIS MOEGI OUT OF ITS SHEATH.
Since my sword's gone...

DASH!!
HOW LOVELY.
THIS IS CUTE. I'LL TAKE IT.
UGH... LET GO!
KAEDE!!
STOP JOKING, PIG-FROG! LET GO OF KAEDE!!
DON'T TOUCH HER, YOU IDIOT!
"TAKE IT"?! HEY!
YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE HER!
DID YOU SAY KAEDE?!

MY SISTER'S BEEN LOST FOR A LONG TIME, ANYWAY. THERE'S NO WAY TO SEARCH FOR HER KID.

HMPH.
BASH!
THAT WAS MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.
YOU KNEW THIS AND...
Hey! b


NOW BE QUIET!
I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF IT'S A GIRL OR A BOY.
DEMONS CARRY THEIR OFFSPRING FOR A PERIOD OF 50 TO 100 YEARS.

DON'T YOU WANT TO BE ABLE TO HOLD KAEDE?

OOPS.
SHE WAS JUST HERE!
HEY, WHERE IS KAEDE?

THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

Aaaaugh!

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!!
CHIIIIING
Hyah!
VWOOOSH
?!
GLARE
HE'S NOT HUMAN!
HIS EYES ARE TURNING GOLD.
WAIT A MINUTE. IF THIS GUY'S HALF-DEMON, THERE IS A CHANCE...
NO, WHAT AM I THINKING? I JUST RAN INTO HIM TODAY. WHAT ARE THE ODDS...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, ASAGI? THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN DRAW...
PULL
KRKK!
THAT WOULD BE...

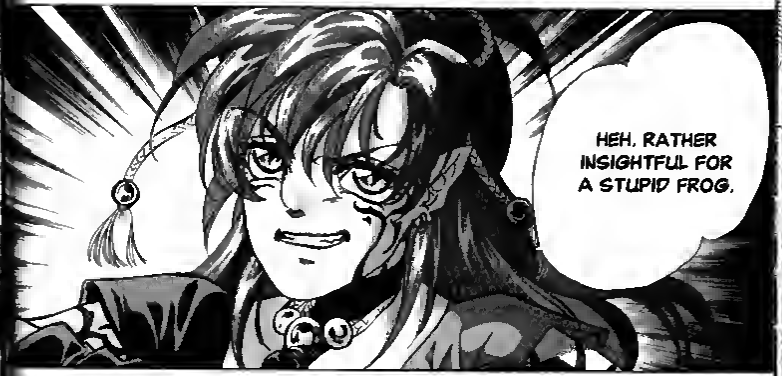
I DREW IT!!
FSHOOOO
CHAK
KAEDE?!
FLASH!!
SWOOOSH
Waaugh!

WHOOSH
ASAGI!!
SWIMP
I'M BURNING!
WHOOSH
OU... OU... OUCH.

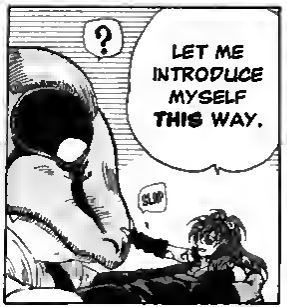
Heh heh heh
DINGO.

UGGH...

I'LL TAKE THAT, TOO.
IF THIS IS KAEDE, THEN THAT'S PROBABLY THE MOEGI!


HEH. RATHER INSIGHTFUL FOR A STUPID FROG.

HAVE FUN.

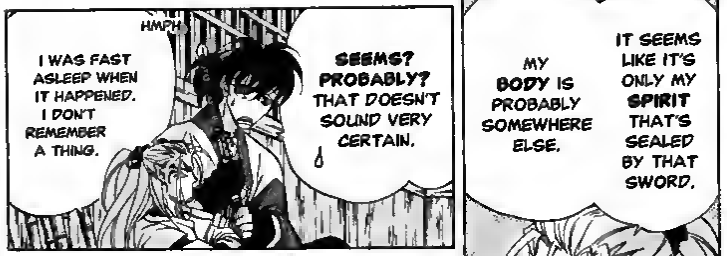

?
LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF THIS WAY.
SLAP

SKRSH!!
CRACK

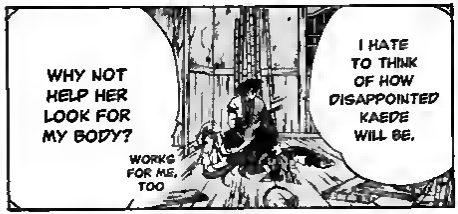
WAKE UP!
SLICE HIM UP ALONG WITH HIS DEMON ORB!!
SKWP
YAAAAAH!

WHAT. YOU CAN'T TELL?
A BIT GLOW. AREN'T WE?
STARE
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D BE MY SISTER'S CHILD...
SERVES YOU RIGHT, PIG-FROG
CRACKLE
I SAW YOUR EYES AND REALIZED YOU WERE A HALF-DEMON.
CRACKLE
IT'S ME.
KURENAI.
WHAT?!

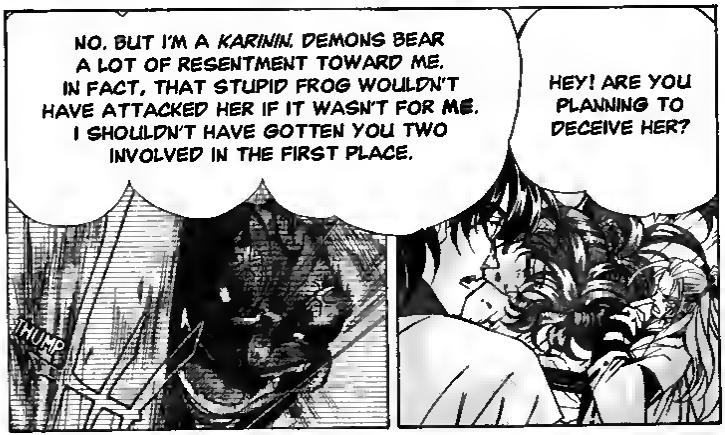
BWOOM
PWOOF
NOT EVEN A DENT.
AMAZING.
PANTE
KCHK
SWISH


HMPH
I WAS FAST ASLEEP WHEN IT HAPPENED. I DON'T REMEMBER A THING.
SEEMS? PROBABLY? THAT DOESN'T SOUND VERY CERTAIN.

MY BODY IS PROBABLY SOMEWHERE ELSE.
IT SEEMS LIKE IT'S ONLY MY SPIRIT THAT'S SEALED BY THAT SWORD.


WHY NOT HELP HER LOOK FOR MY BODY?
WORKS FOR ME, TOO
I HATE TO THINK OF HOW DISAPPOINTED KAEDE WILL BE.

I CAN'T TAKE KAEDE WITH ME...


NO. BUT I'M A KARININ. DEMONS BEAR A LOT OF RESENTMENT TOWARD ME. IN FACT, THAT STUPID FROG WOULDN'T HAVE ATTACKED HER IF IT WASN'T FOR ME. I SHOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN YOU TWO INVOLVED IN THE FIRST PLACE.
HEY! ARE YOU PLANNING TO DECEIVE HER?
THUMP

CHK

WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON...
HOW SHOULD I KNOW? ALL OF A SUDDEN, I WAS BLOWN INTO KAEDE.
THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE

FSHOOO

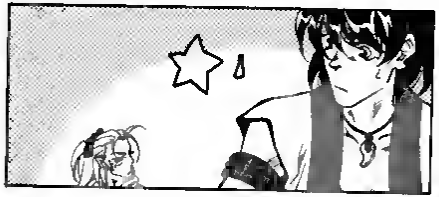
WHM

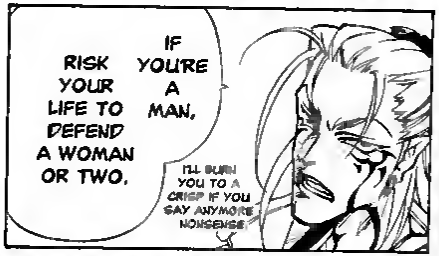
Huh?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
YEP, SHE'S REAL PERSISTENT.
HEH.
I GUARANTEE YOU.
I REALLY SPOILED THAT GIRL.

AND IF YOU STILL INSIST ON LEAVING HER BEHIND, YOU'D BETTER TELL HER YOURSELF.

I WARN YOU THOUGH, IF YOU DISAPPEAR WITHOUT A WORD,
AND I'LL BE DRAGGED ALONG.
KAEDE WILL SEARCH ALL OVER JAPAN UNTIL SHE FINDS YOU.
WHERE ARE YOU, ASAGI?
日の本。
JAPAN

FINE.
I'LL TELL HER MYSELF.




IF YOU'RE A MAN,
RISK YOUR LIFE TO DEFEND A WOMAN OR TWO.
I'LL BURN YOU TO A CRISP IF YOU SAY ANYMORE NONSENSE

YOU DON'T WANT TO PUT YOUR DAUGHTER IN DANGER EITHER, DO YOU?
THEN MAKE SURE YOU DEFEND HER.

AND DIDN'T YOU PROMISE KAEDE THAT
YOU'LL LET HER MEET THE REAL ME?

KURENAI...
I'VE DECIDED TO PUT SOME FAITH IN YOU.

THAT IS WHY...

I
ASAGI...
MMN
TWITCH
I!
STARE
WHAT?
YEAH, IT'S A NICE DAY.
IS IT MORNING ALREADY?
chirp chirp
FOR A MOMENT... I HAD THE FEELING YOU WERE GOING TO LEAVE...
YAWN

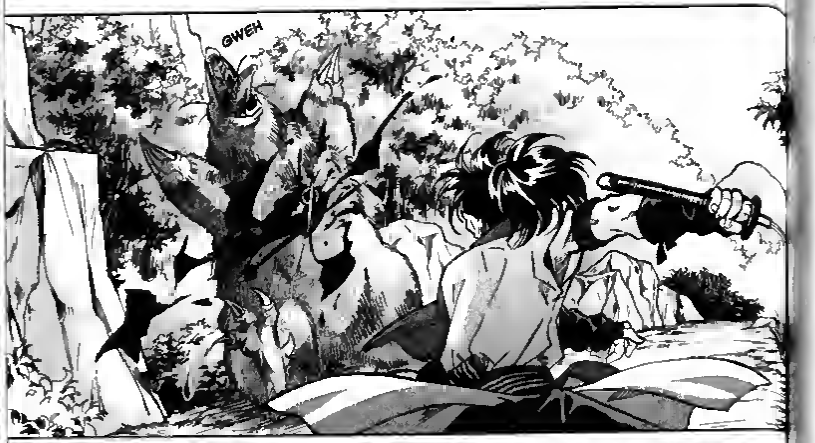
I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I?
SMILE
I'M GOING TO HELP YOU MEET YOUR REAL FATHER.
WAAUGH!
THUMP
ASAGI!
...
HMPF!
YEAH!

CHAPTER 2:
KAPPA

CHAPTER 1: THE MOEBI / THE END

GRRRRGH
BWSH
BWSH
SHOOT.
NO EFFECT.
ASAGI! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? DRAW THE MOEGI!

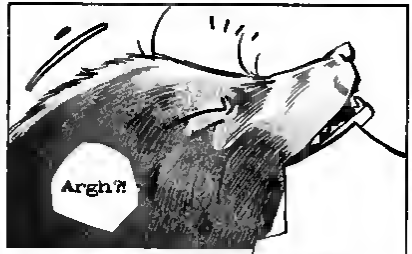
WHOOOO
HMPH!
YOU'RE A PERSISTENT LITTLE SNOT...
GRR.
AIN'T YA?
WHOOSH

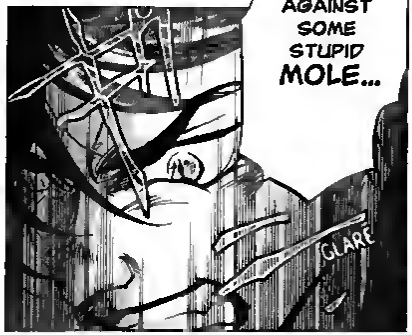

GWEH

THAT SHOULD DO IT.
HMPH!
CLENCH

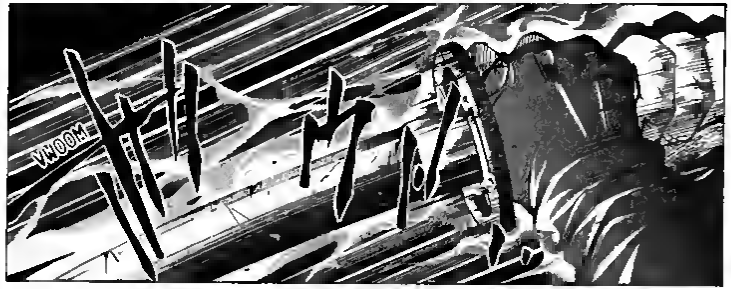
THUD

WHAT?!
NO.


Argh?!


AGAINST SOME STUPID MOLE...
GLARE

LEAP
whirl
whirl


VWOOM

IT'S HEAVY.
YOU MUST BE TIRED NOW. I'LL CARRY THIS.

thd
thd
thd
thd
CAN'T YOU AT LEAST PRETEND IT'S HEAVIER?

pop
NO PROBLEM. IT'S LIGHT!

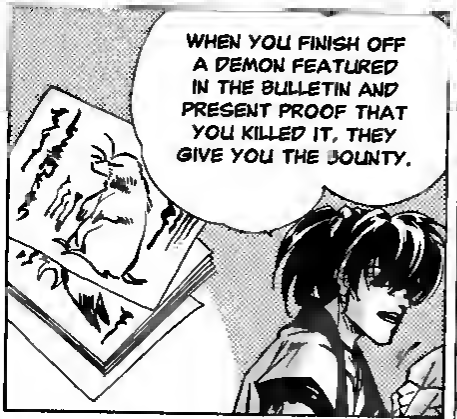
YEAH?
WAIT UP A MINUTE!

WHY DIDN'T YOU USE THE MOEGI?!
WHAT DO YOU THINK IT'S FOR?
HUH?!

YOUR SWORD BROKE AGAIN.
CRACK

TT
swoosh

THWUMP


WHEN YOU FINISH OFF A DEMON FEATURED IN THE BULLETIN AND PRESENT PROOF THAT YOU KILLED IT, THEY GIVE YOU THE BOUNTY.

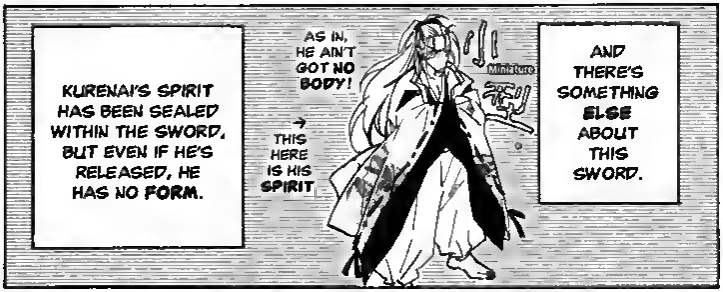
HEY, LET'S HEAD OVER TO THE RANGER'S OFFICE.
DON'T WORRY.
RANGER'S OFFICE?
CREAK

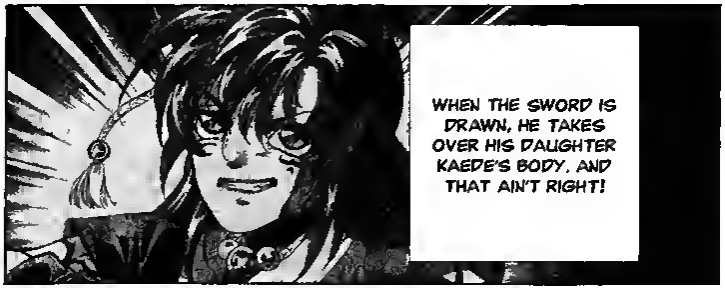
RIGHT.
SO THIS IS THE PROOF.
THE MOLE'S HEAD.

WHO'D WANT SOMETHING LIKE YOU TO TAKE OVER?
I KNOW YOU'RE HER FATHER, BUT I FEEL SORRY FOR HER WHEN THAT HAPPENS.

THE THING IS, IF I DRAW THE MOEGI, YOU'LL END UP INSIDE KAEDE, RIGHT?

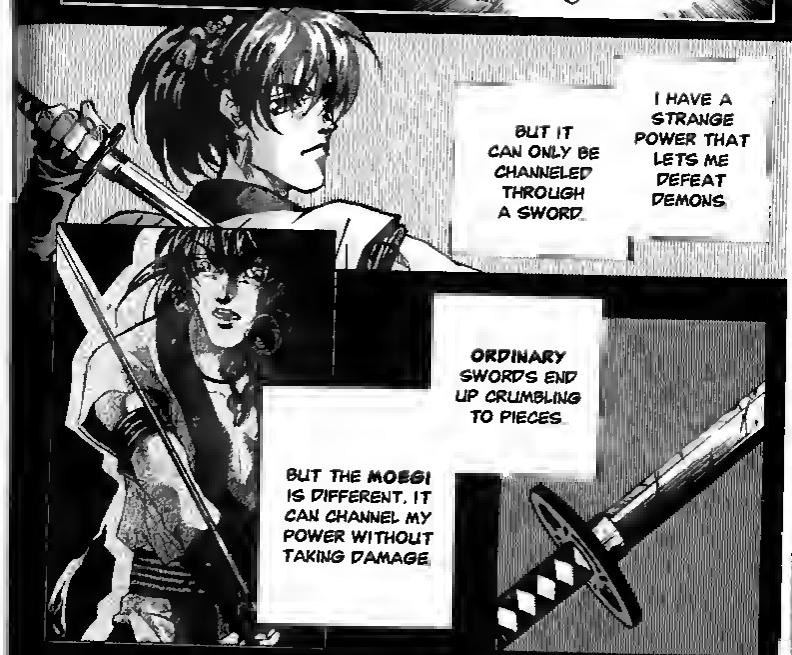
HEY!
SO WHAT? SHE DOESN'T REMEMBER A THING, ANYWAY.
SOME-THING LIKE ME?!


KURENAI'S SPIRIT HAS BEEN SEALED WITHIN THE SWORD, BUT EVEN IF HE'S RELEASED, HE HAS NO FORM.
AS IN, HE AIN'T GOT NO BODY!
→ THIS HERE IS HIS SPIRIT
MinieKuro
AND THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE ABOUT THIS SWORD.


WHEN THE SWORD IS DRAWN, HE TAKES OVER HIS DAUGHTER KAEDE'S BODY. AND THAT AIN'T RIGHT!

WHO'RE YOU TALKING TO?!
Y'SEE, THE MOEGI IS...

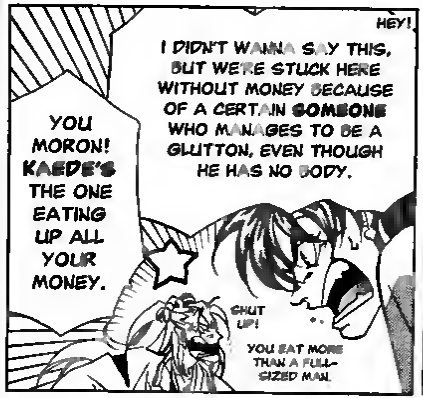
A DEMONIC SWORD, LEGEND HAS IT THAT A LONG TIME AGO, THE SOULS OF DEMONS WERE COLLECTED IN ORDER TO CREATE IT.

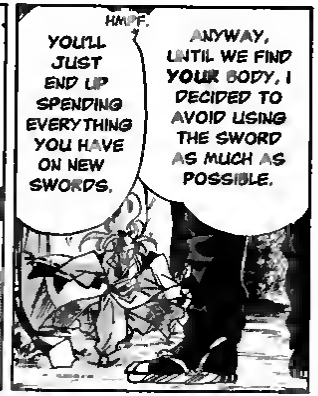

BUT IT CAN ONLY BE CHANNELED THROUGH A SWORD.
I HAVE A STRANGE POWER THAT LETS ME DEFEAT DEMONS.
ORDINARY SWORDS END UP CRUMBLING TO PIECES.
BUT THE MOEGI IS DIFFERENT. IT CAN CHANNEL MY POWER WITHOUT TAKING DAMAGE.

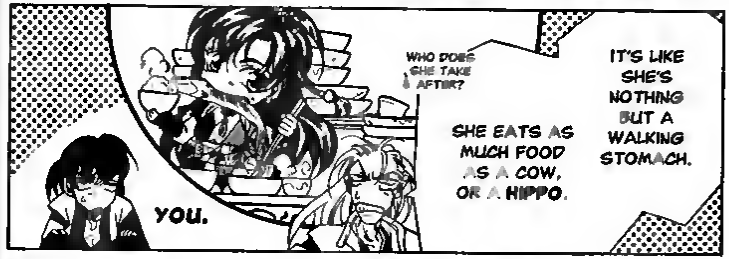
RANGER'S OFFICE, BUNGO BRANCH

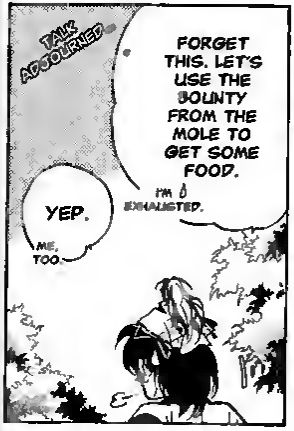
HMMP

ASAGI.
SURE.
THERE WE GO.
DON'T BE TOO LONG!
IT'LL BE A MINUTE, OKAY?
OH. THE JINBEI MOLE.
PAT


YOU MORON! KAEDE'S THE ONE EATING UP ALL YOUR MONEY.
HEY!
I DIDN'T WANNA SAY THIS, BUT WE'RE STUCK HERE WITHOUT MONEY BECAUSE OF A CERTAIN SOMEONE WHO MANAGES TO BE A GLUTTON, EVEN THOUGH HE HAS NO BODY.
SHUT UP!
YOU EAT MORE THAN A FULL-SIZED MAN.


HMPF.
YOU'LL JUST END UP SPENDING EVERYTHING YOU HAVE ON NEW SWORDS.
ANYWAY, UNTIL WE FIND YOUR BODY, I DECIDED TO AVOID USING THE SWORD AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.


YOU.
WHO DOES SHE TAKE AFTER?
SHE EATS AS MUCH FOOD AS A COW, OR A HIPPO.
IT'S LIKE SHE'S NOTHING BUT A WALKING STOMACH.


TALK ADJOURNED?
FORGET THIS. LET'S USE THE BOUNTY FROM THE MOLE TO GET SOME FOOD.
I'M EXHAUSTED.
YEP.
ME, TOO.

I CAN SEE THAT.
GULP
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MUCH TROUBLE I'VE GONE THROUGH TO KEEP HER FED?
gloom
mutter

YOU'RE TOO EASY ON HER!
OF COURSE SHE GETS HUNGRY.
WELL, KAEDE'S STILL GROWING, YOU KNOW.

DON'T GO TOO FAR, KAEDE.
OKAY.
IS IT OKAY IF I GO FOR A WALK?
UH-HUH.
SURE. JUST BE CAREFUL.
HEY. HOW'S IT GOING?

UH...
HUMPH
HM.
IS THIS GUY... HUMAN?
THE BULLETIN.
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

HMM.
flip
flip
THERE'S MUG SHOTS OF ALL THE DEMONS ON THE WANTED LIST.
VICIOUS, EH? I BET THEY'RE JUST A BUNCH OF LIGHTWEIGHTS WHO PLAYED SOME PRANK ON THE HUMANS...
A WANTED BULLETIN FOR THE TRULY VICIOUS ONES.
FLIP
THE BOUNTY'S BIGGER, TOO.
HUH? NONE OF THESE GUYS LOOK TOUGH AT ALL.
THEY'RE ALL JUST PUNKS
THIS ONE'S FOR THE FIRST-RATE DEMONS...
RUSTLE
GEH!
OH. SEE YA.
THANKS SEE YOU LATER BYE!
dash
ZOOM
UHH...
FLINCH
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING. HERE'S YOUR BOUNTY, SON.
GRARR!
EXCUSE MY IGNORANCE.
OKAY, OKAY
THAT IRRITATES ME, TOO.
AND WHY HADN'T YOU HEARD OF ME WHEN THERE WAS SUCH A HUGE PICTURE RIGHT THERE IN THAT BOOK?!
HOW DARE THEY CREATE A MUG SHOT OF ME?! THE IMPUDENCE!
hmm?

PLEASE STOP THIS MEANINGLESS KILLING!
UH-HUH. BUT THEN FUYO...
WELL, SHE KEPT ON NAGGING ME NOT TO KILL...
ACK!
YOUR WIFE!
SO THAT MAKES HER...
MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHAT'S TAKING KAEDE SO LONG?
UGH
WHO'S FUYO?
KAEDE'S MOTHER.
OH, SHE IS KIND OF LATE, ISN'T SHE?

WELL, YOU JUST DON'T SEEM THAT WAY TO ME.
.....
HUH?
ARE YOU STILL AN EVIL DEMON, KURENAI?
I AM WHO I AM. ALWAYS HAVE BEEN, ALWAYS WILL BE.
UH, YOU USED TO?!
AND I FELT SO MUCH BETTER AFTER-WARDS, TOO.
BUT I USED TO SLAUGHTER ANYONE, HUMAN OR DEMON, WHO GOT ON MY NERVES.

WOW. THE MOON'S BEAU-TIFUL.
WHAT A NICE NIGHT.

I THINK I'LL HEAD BACK AND HAVE ASAGI BUY ME SOME.
THIP

SOME DANGO TO EAT WOULD MAKE IT EVEN BETTER.
MOON

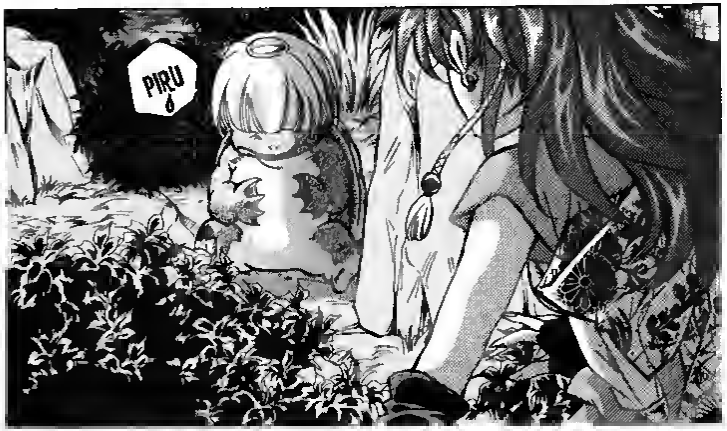
?!
rustle

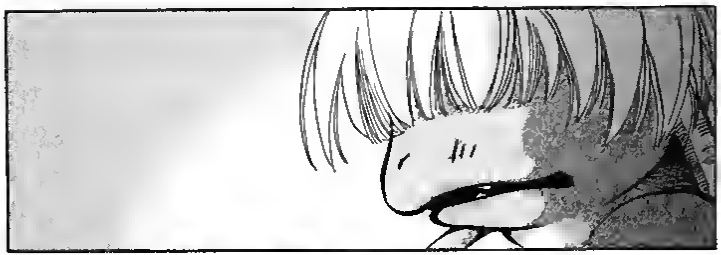
?!

OH.

RUSTLE

IS SOMEBODY THERE?


PIRU



bow
PIRURU

PIRU
WELL, I'M GOING BACK. YOU GO HOME, TOO.

hop

BYE-BYE!

bow

rustle

DON'T BE SCARED. I WON'T HURT YOU.

PIRU
ARE YOU HURT? YOU'RE BLEEDING.

?
RUSTLE
OH, YEAH.

GOOD. KEEP IT WRAPPED UP FOR A WHILE, OKAY?

THIS OINTMENT IS FOR HUMANS, BUT I THINK IT'LL WORK ON YOU, TOO.
RUB RUB

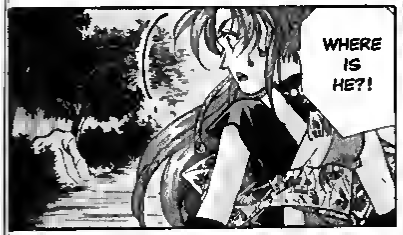
WOOOSH!
Aaugh!
grab
SWASH!!
YOU MUST BE THAT GIRL, KAEDE.
RUSTLE
YES. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
NOT MUCH. I JUST NEED THAT SWORD YOU'RE CARRYING.
HAND OVER THE MOEGI!

THUD

Argh!

WHAM
CHOM

YOU LITTLE--!


WHERE IS HE?!

GRAB

SWIPE

YOU SHOULD'VE JUST GIVEN ME THE SWORD WHEN I ASKED FOR IT...
Ugh!

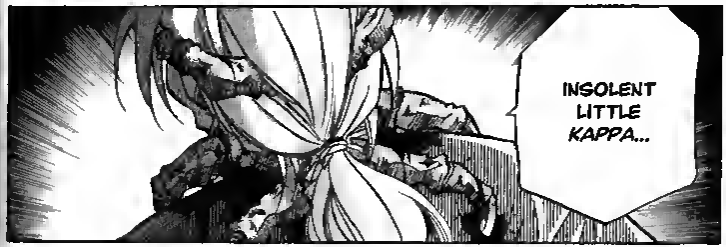
I'LL FINISH YOU OFF TOGETHER!
SWISH

ZWSH

BWSH
SKSSSSH
PYAU!

FOOLISH CHILD...
SKRRK

ARE YOU OKAY?!
PIU...


INSOLENT LITTLE KAPPA...

KASHING
ASAGI!
HEY.

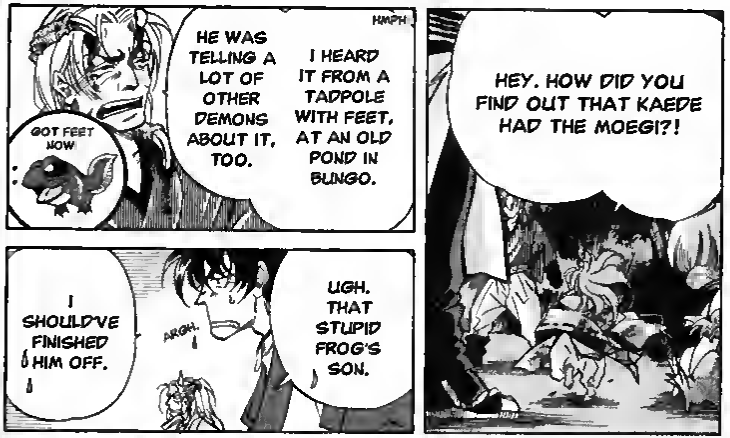
KASHING
thump

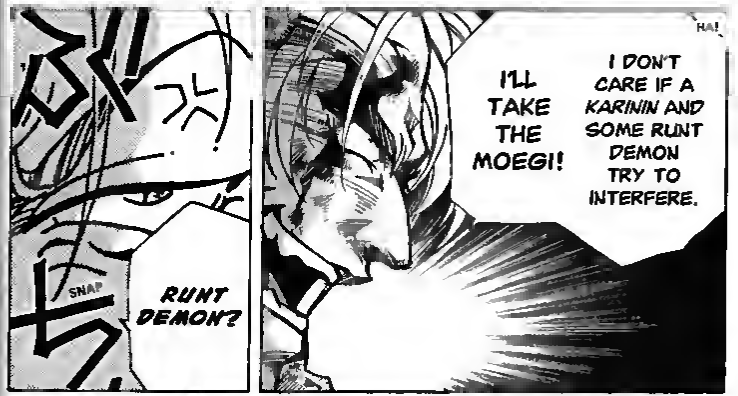
THE LITTLE ONE'LL FRY YOU TO A CRISP IF YOU KEEP PICKING ON KAEDE.
KRRK

FATHER
FOOL! WHO'RE YOU CALLING LITTLE?!

YOU'RE A PARASITE, AREN'T YOU?

YEAH, I THOUGHT HE WAS A BIT STRANGE FOR A HUMAN.
HEY, WASN'T THIS GUY IN THE RANGER'S OFFICE?
THAT EXPLAINS IT. A DEMON THAT TAKES OVER A HUMAN.


HMPH
HE WAS TELLING A LOT OF OTHER DEMONS ABOUT IT, TOO.
I HEARD IT FROM A TADPOLE WITH FEET, AT AN OLD POND IN BUNGO.
GOT FEET NOW
HEY. HOW DID YOU FIND OUT THAT KAEDE HAD THE MOEGI?!
I SHOULD'VE FINISHED HIM OFF.
ARGH.
UGH. THAT STUPID FROG'S SON.


I'LL TAKE THE MOEGI!
I DON'T CARE IF A KARININ AND SOME RUNT DEMON TRY TO INTERFERE.
HA!
SNAP
RUNT DEMON?
CRACK
CRACK
DO YOU THINK I CAN BE KICKED AROUND BY A MERE PARASITE LIKE YOU?
YOU PATHETIC WORM!

HOT-HEAD!
CALM DOWN.
I WAS GOING TO, ANYWAY.

SHK

THAT'S IT! DRAW THE MOEGI, ASAGI!

HERE GOES!
CLANG

CHIIIING

BAFWOOSH
VWOOSH
¡PIRU
YOU HELPED SAVE KAEDE, DIDN'T YOU?

GRIN
THANKS.

SCUFF
STAY BACK SO YOU DON'T GET HURT.

HERE YOU GO, WORM!

!!
HA!
WHAT WERE YOU AIMING AT?
TOO SLOW.
WHOOSH
YAAAH!
THWOMP
BAM
WHOOOSH

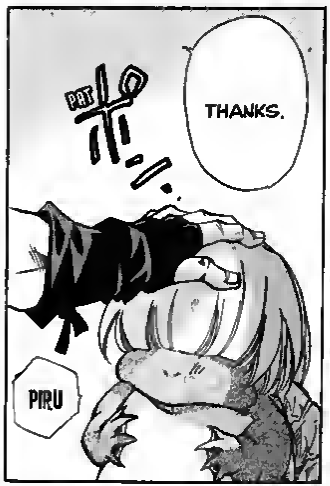
PANTE
SPLASH
SPLASH
FSHOOO
PANTE
GASPE
PANTE
SKLPSH!

WOOSH
URAAURGH!
WOOSH
I'M BURNING! PUT IT OUT!
W-WATER, WATER... PLEASE...
HUP
HUP

SPLASH!
CLENCH
NEXT TIME,
FIGHT WITH YOUR OWN BODY.
GRH
A KARININ!

ZZZZ

PIRURU
DON'T WORRY. SHE'S JUST SLEEPING.


PAT
THANKS.
PIRU

HEY, DID KAEDE DRESS THIS WOUND? PRETTY SLOPPY JOB, HUH?

OH, IS THAT WHY YOU HELPED HER?

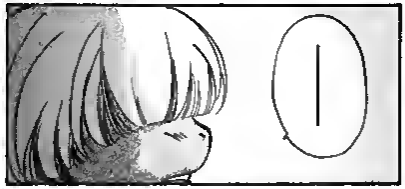
chik

GLEAM
PWFF
GURUWUWUT

HHOOSH
HPHEWE

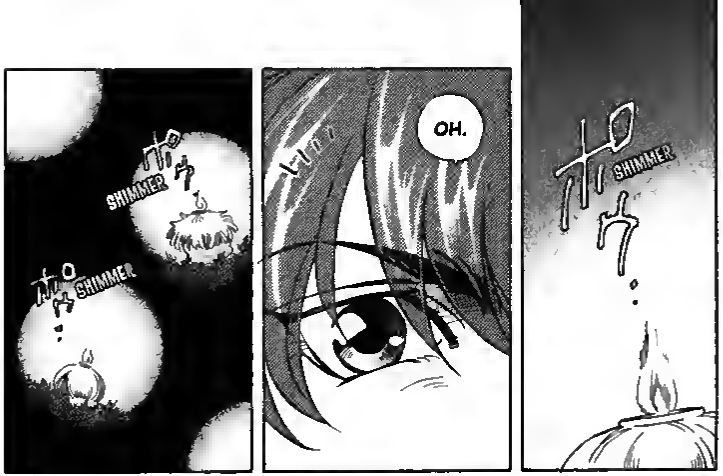
KAEDE'S FAINTED, SO WE MIGHT AS WELL STAY THERE FOR THE NIGHT. IT'S PRETTY DARK, THOUGH. YOU SURE YOU CAN FIND THE WAY?
I THINK SO.
RUSTLE
OKAY. IF WE GO DOWN THE ROAD A BIT, THERE'S A PLACE WE CAN STAY.

WELL, YOU GET HOME SAFELY...



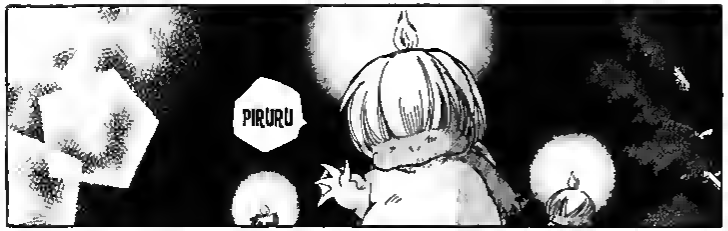
URMF

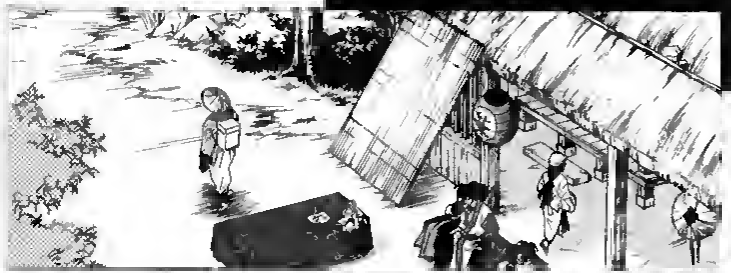
DON'T SEE HIM.
HUH?
Where'd the KAPPA go?

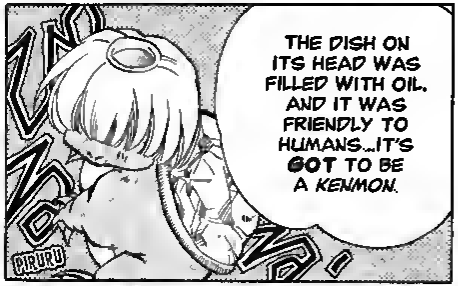

SHIMMER
SHIMMER
OH.
SHIMMER

LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE LIGHTING THE WAY.
I GUESS HE HAD FRIENDS.

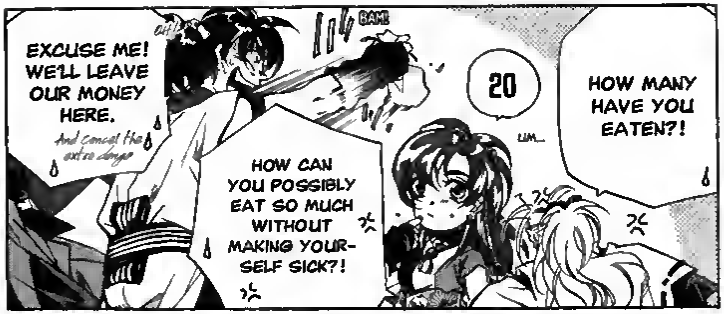
HUH?
YAWN
COME ON, TAKE A LOOK.
UMN...
HEY, KAEDE, WAKE UP.

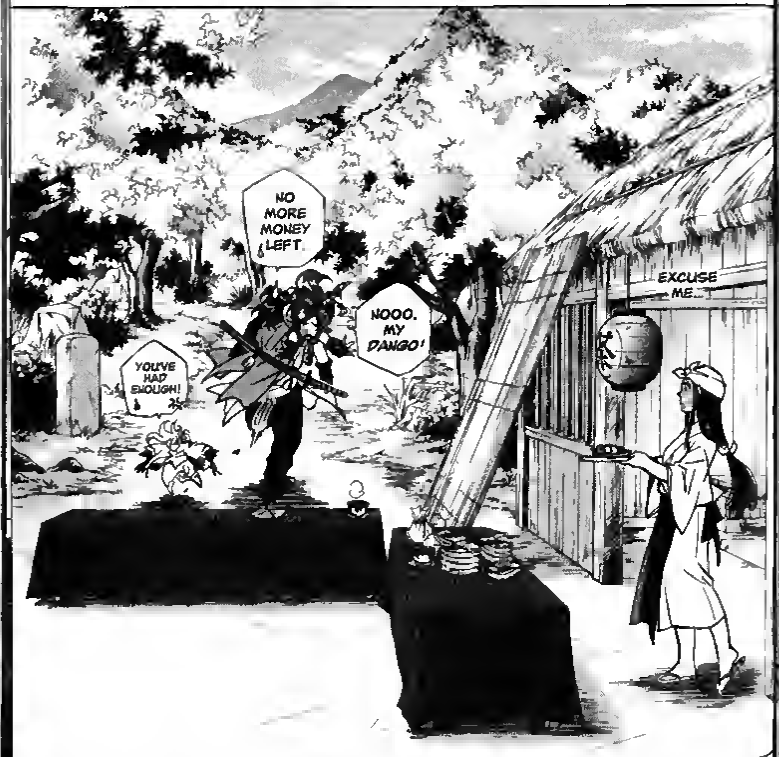






*A SPECIES OF KAPPA (WATER IMP) THAT LIVE IN THE GAJUMARU TREES OF THE AMAMI ISLANDS.


EXCUSE ME! WE'LL LEAVE OUR MONEY HERE.
And conceal the extra change
BAM
20
HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY EAT SO MUCH WITHOUT MAKING YOURSELF SICK?!
HOW MANY HAVE YOU EATEN?!
UM...


NO MORE MONEY LEFT.
NOOO. MY DANGO!
YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH!
EXCUSE ME...

GULP
YOU'RE LUCKY THAT KAPPA WASN'T MALICIOUS. SEEMS LIKE YOU RUN INTO TROUBLE EVERY TIME YOU GO OUT ON YOUR OWN, KAEDE.
WELL, WE EARNED QUITE A LOT BY TURNING IN THAT PARASITE, SO WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO WORRY FOR A WHILE...

MORE, PLEASE.

AAAAUGH!!

ONE MORE DANGO!
MUNCH MUNCH
YUP!

ROOOOAR
AAAAUGH!
I'M TAKING YOUR DAUGHTER.
AAAUGH!
BAM!
MY NAME IS KURENAI, THE DEMON OF FLAME.
AAAAUGH!
BAM!
YAE!
SKI...
REMEMBER THAT!

SWORD BY THE

ANOTHER SERVING, PLEASE!
SOBA & UDON
YEAH, TEN'S OKAY.
ASAGI SAID I COULD HAVE UP TO TEN SERVINGS.
UGH.
SLURP
YOU'RE GONNA BLOAT UP LIKE A PIG IF YOU DON'T WATCH YOURSELF, GIRL.
YEAH, THIS IS THE TENTH ONE.
ANOTHER DEMON ATTACK?
DEMON?!
THEN WHY DON'T YOU SET A BETTER EXAMPLE FOR HER?!
I THOUGHT YOU SAID I WAS SPOILING HER!
Look how much you've eaten!
SHUT YER TRAP!
GRRR

CHAPTER 3:
SUOH

SPLASH!
RUSTLE
A MALICIOUS DEMON NAMED KURENAI.
HIM

HEY!
SORRY
YOU'RE SPITTIN' ALL OVER ME.
UM...YOU SURE IT'S THIS GUY?
APPARENTLY HE CAN CONTROL FLAMES.
HE GOES AROUND ANNOUNCING HIS NAME, SETTING THINGS ON FIRE.

DOOM
THANKS FOR THE INFO, GUYS!
NOOO! MY NOODLES!

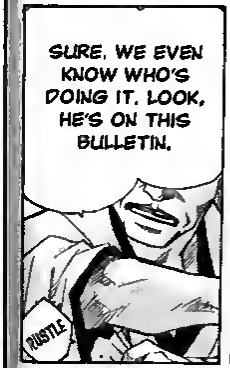
Oh, yeah
NOW THAT I TAKE A GOOD LOOK, HE IS PRETTY UGLY.
SNAP
WHAAT?!
JUST LOOK AT THIS WICKED FACE.

HEY, WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE CALLING UGLY?!
I'll burn you guys to a crisp!
YAARGH!

BY A DEMON?
THERE'VE BEEN SOME BIZARRE INCIDENTS HERE LATELY. SOME YOUNG GIRLS WERE KIDNAPPED, AND TURNED UP DEAD WITH THEIR LIVERS DEVOURED.
YEAH.

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?
WHAT'S THAT ABOUT DEMONS?
TELL ME!

THE ONLY YOUNG GIRLS LEFT AROUND HERE ARE IN THE VILLAGE ACROSS THE RIVER.
JUST THREE DAYS AGO, TATSUZO'S DAUGHTER YAE WAS SNATCHED AWAY.


SURE. WE EVEN KNOW WHO'S DOING IT. LOOK, HE'S ON THIS BULLETIN.
RUSTLE

slurp
ARE THERE ANY CLUES?

WHOOOSH
HE SETS FIRE TO THE GIRL'S HOUSE. THEN,
AFTER HE EATS HER LIVER, HE JUST LEAVES THE CORPSE IN THE VILLAGE. AIN'T THAT AWFUL?

I COULDN'T HELP OVER-HEARING YOUR STORY. YOU MIND TELLING ME MORE?

LOOKED PRETTY SIMILAR, DIDN'T IT...
WAS IT JUST ME?
HEY, WASN'T THAT...

tap tap

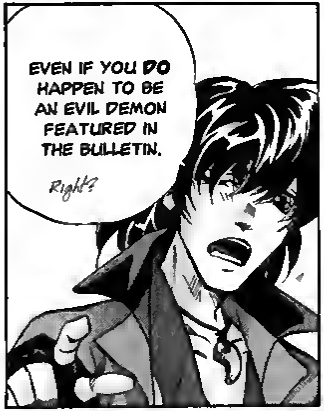
DAMN IT!!
THOSE FOOLS! I HAVEN'T SET ANY FIRES OR EATEN ANY GIRLS!!

WHAT?!
LET'S HEAD TO THE VILLAGE.

HOW DARE THIS GUY PRETEND TO BE ME. HE'S GONNA PAY FOR THIS!
Jeez!
I KNOW. WE WERE IN BUNGO 'TIL YESTERDAY, ANYWAY.
YOU COULDN'T HAVE RAIDED THE VILLAGE.

THERE'S NO REASON YOU SHOULD BE HUNTED DOWN FOR SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T DO.
ARE YOU SUGGESTING WE GET INVOLVED IN THIS?!
WE MIGHT FIND SOMETHING IF WE CHECK OUT THE RUINS OF THAT HOUSE.

sksh


EVEN IF YOU DO HAPPEN TO BE AN EVIL DEMON FEATURED IN THE BULLETIN.
Right?

STRANGE...

IF A DEMON USES FLAMES, IT SHOULD LEAVE AT LEAST SOME TRACE OF ITS AURA.

WHAT IS?
THERE'S NO DEMON AURA.

YOU STAY WITH YOUR FATHER, KAEDE.
HURRY UP.
OKAY.
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...
SNIFF
AND IT SMELLS LIKE OIL, TOO.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
I'M GONNA GO TALK TO THE VILLAGERS.
?!
WHERE IS IT COMING FROM?
DEMONIC AURA?!
THANKS!
NO PROBLEM.

SAME TRADE? ARE YOU A KARININ, TOO?
YEAH.
HUH?
YOU'RE A KARININ, AREN'T YOU?
I CAN KIND OF TELL IF SOMEONE'S IN THE SAME TRADE AS ME. I CAN SENSE IT.

POOF
YOU CALLED?!
BY THE WAY I WANTED TO ASK...
WHY IS THERE A DEMONIC AURA AROUND YOU?
RATHER PERCEPTIVE. THAT'S BECAUSE OF HER.
RINRIN!
THIS IS OVERTIME NOW.
I THINK I'VE ALREADY REPAID YOU PLENTY.
I fixed, you know
I DO MY BEST TO SERVE YOU, SUOH.
YOU GOT SOMETHIN' TO SAY?
GLARE
I SAVED HER FROM A TIGER IN MOROKOSHI* AND SHE'S IN THE PROCESS OF REPAYING ME.
AH. I SEE WE HAVE GUEST.
NIHAO
SHE'S TINY, JUST LIKE SOMEONE I KNOW...

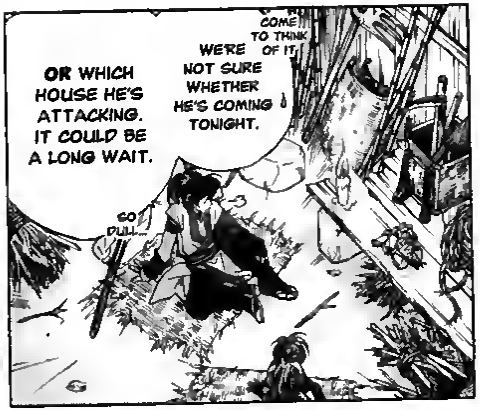
*MOROKOSHI IS AN OLD JAPANESE NAME FOR CHINA.

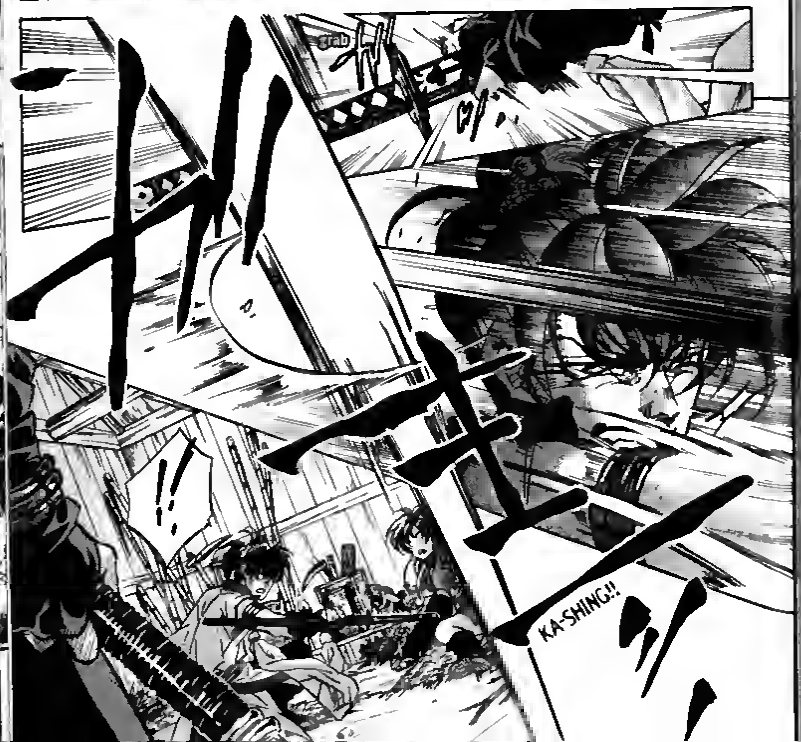
YOU'RE A BIG SHOT
THE MASTER SPEAR WIELDER WHO HAS NO EQUAL IN HIS ABILITY TO HUNT DEMONS? EVERYONE IN THIS BUSINESS KNOWS YOU!
THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT I DON'T NEED RIGHT NOW...
MY NAME'S SUOH. NICE MEETING YOU.
OH?
YOU'VE HEARD OF ME? I'M HONORED.
SUOH? THE SPEAR EXPERT?
HEARD OF YOU?
OH YEAH, YOU DO HAVE A SPEAR.
Ha ha...ha
OH...WELL... OBVIOUSLY.
I WOULD PASS UP AN OPPORTUNITY TO BRING DOWN ONE AS BIG AS KURENAI, THE DEMON OF FLAME.
OF COURSE. I'M HERE TO DESTROY THE DEMON. BESIDES, THERE'S NO WAY...
I'M ASAGI. ARE YOU HERE TO INVESTIGATE THAT INCIDENT, TOO?

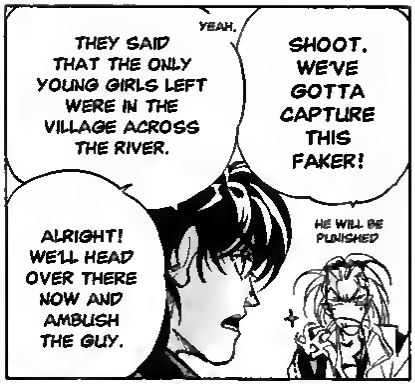
A KARININ?!
YEAH. HE'S APPARENTLY INVESTI-GATING THIS INCIDENT, TOO.
HMPF
STOP COMPLAINING AND GO!
ME NOT LIKE BEING ORDERED AROUND ON YOUR HUNCH.
LIL RASCAL
HMPH
OKAY, OKAY.
KURENAI?!
Shut up!
I'M ACTUALLY HUGE!
HE HAD A TINY DEMON LIKE YOU WITH HIM, KURENAI.
Ha ha!
OH MY
IT'S THE CRIMINAL, KURENAI.
HE LOOK EVIL.
WANTED
STARE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

HEY,
YOU FOLLOW HIM.
WHY?
ASAGI!
AUGH.
I'M COMING BACK NOW!
COME BACK! I'M HUNGRY!
IS THAT ALL YOU CAN SAY?
YEAH, SORRY TO HOLD YOU UP.
MY FRIENDS ARE WAITING, SO I BETTER GET GOING.
SEE YA.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT GUY. THERE'S SOMETHING HE'S NOT LETTING ON ABOUT.
IT'S JUST A HUNCH, THOUGH.

AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO DECIDE WHICH HOUSE TO ATTACK?


COME TO THINK OF IT, WE'RE NOT SURE WHETHER HE'S COMING TONIGHT.
OR WHICH HOUSE HE'S ATTACKING. IT COULD BE A LONG WAIT.
SO DULL...


KA-SHING!!


YEAH.
THEY SAID THAT THE ONLY YOUNG GIRLS LEFT WERE IN THE VILLAGE ACROSS THE RIVER.
SHOOT. WE'VE GOTTA CAPTURE THIS FAKER!
ALRIGHT! WE'LL HEAD OVER THERE NOW AND AMBUSH THE GUY.
HE WILL BE PUNISHED

VILLAGE ACROSS THE RIVER. BETTER TELL SUOH.
THINK

YAWN
CHMP
HAS THAT LIVER-EATING DEMON SHOWN UP YET?
EITHER EAT OR YAWN, NOT BOTH!
munch munch
YAWN

SUOH?!
RINRIN!
BWOOSH
LEAVE IT TO ME!

WHAT THE?!
BWOOOSH
crack
crack
I SEE...
chnk
HUH?!
SONOFA!
URGH!
IT WON'T COME OUT!
WHAT?!
LIGH! URGH!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, IDIOT?!
COME ON, DRAW IT!

BESIDES, WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO SAY A DEMON IS TOTALLY EVIL
JUST BECAUSE HE'S AN INCONVENIENCE?!
HUH?!

AUGH!!

SUOH...

SHOOT. IF SOMETHING KEEPS KURENAI FROM TAKING OVER KAEDE, I CAN'T DRAW THE MOEGI. AND WE'VE BEEN SO SHORT ON MONEY LATELY, I DON'T EVEN HAVE ANOTHER SWORD WITH ME.
uh oh

SO YOU CAN MAKE FORCE FIELDS, EH?

CORRECT. AND UNLESS RINRIN TAKES IT DOWN,
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE FROM THERE, KURENAI.

HUH?!
LISTEN UP, YOU EVIL-EYED KARININ!
HEY!

THAT STUFF IS MADE UP BY YOU HUMANS TO SERVE YOUR OWN AGENDAS!
IDIOT!
Hah!
GIMME A BREAK. YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE A DEMON WHO'S AT THE TOP OF THE WANTED LIST?

I HAVEN'T EATEN ANY GIRL'S LIVER! SOMEBODY OUT THERE'S IMPERSONATING ME!

AUGH!

R-RIGHT.
YOU GUYS PUT OUT THE FIRE!
I'LL GO AFTER THEM.

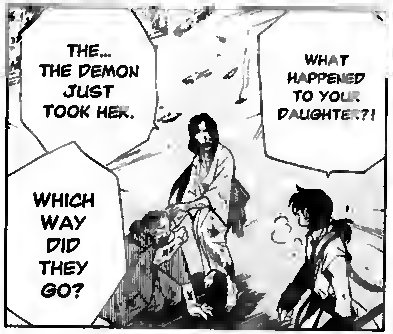
sksh
sksh
sksh

NO...
PLEASE...

STOP IT!!
NOOO!!!

HEY, SUOH!

O... OKAY.
RINRIN! DON'T LET THEM MOVE!


THE... THE DEMON JUST TOOK HER.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR DAUGHTER?!
WHICH WAY DID THEY GO?

THAT WAY. INTO THE FOREST.

WHOOSH

I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU REVEALED YOURSELF.
SO YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S BEEN MASQUERADING AS KURENAI AND EATING ALL THAT HUMAN LIVER...
hmph
HA!
BYAKKO, THE WHITE FOX!
WOOOSH

WHOOSH!!
THP
THAT ARMBAND... YOU'RE A KARININ, AREN'T YOU?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

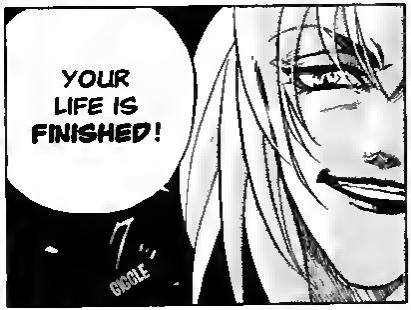
ARGH!
CRUNCH
LUNGE
CLENCH
SMACK

ARE YOU ASAGI?
A NOTORIOUS DEMON LIKE YOU POSING AS ANOTHER DEMON, HUH? I NEVER WOULD'VE GUESSED.
WHAT?!
IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ASAGI, HE'S IN TOWN.
HUH?!
I'M WRONG AGAIN?
SHOOT
WHAT ARE YOU AFTER, ANYWAY?
I GET IT. YOU'VE BEEN RAIDING THE VILLAGE USING KURENAI'S NAME IN ORDER TO LURE THOSE GUYS OUT.
GLARE
THE SWORD.

BIU

IN ORDER TO FINISH OFF KARININ WHO TRY TO COME AFTER ME. PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

PRETTY STUPID OF ME TO FALL FOR IT, THOUGH.
SHOOT.
THAT'S A PRETTY ROTTEN TRICK.


YOUR LIFE IS FINISHED!
GIGGLE

N...
NO!!

BNDS

FWOOSH

URGH...
SHP

HER MOUTH WAS FULL OF VENOM...
KGH!

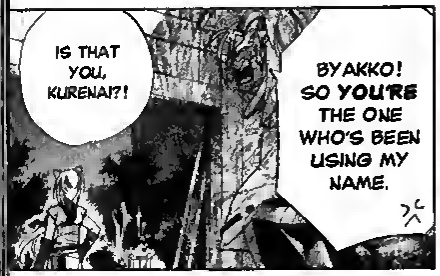
SHE WAS A PUPPET CONTROLLED BY MY ORB.
YES. THAT GIRL IS ALREADY DEAD.

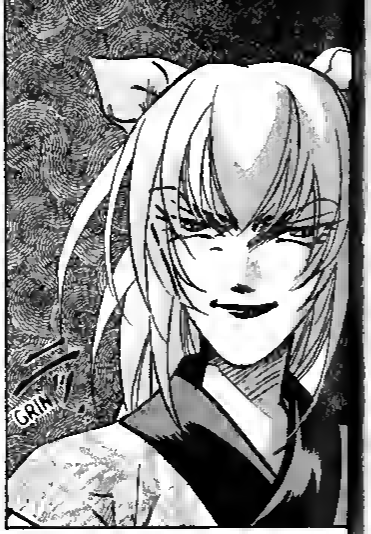
A TRANS-FERENCE ORB...

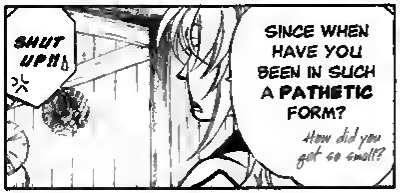
PLEASE, RINRIN. I'M BEGGING YOU!
SUOH'S WAY TOO LATE. YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT HIM TOO, RIGHT?!
UNLESS YOU TAKE DOWN THE FORCE FIELD, WE CAN'T GO RESCUE HIM.
NO. SUOH NOT PERFECT, BUT HE STILL MY MASTER. I OBEY HIS ORDERS.
OR I GET IN TROUBLE.

I'M TELLING YOU, SOMETHING MIGHT'VE HAPPENED TO HIM!
TAKE IT DOWN, YOU MIDGET-DEMON.
HEY, WHO YOU TALKING TO?!
UNZ

YOU MUST BE ASAGI.


BYAKKO! SO YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S BEEN USING MY NAME.
IS THAT YOU, KURENAI?!


GRIN


SINCE WHEN HAVE YOU BEEN IN SUCH A PATHETIC FORM?
How did you get so small?
SHUT UP!!

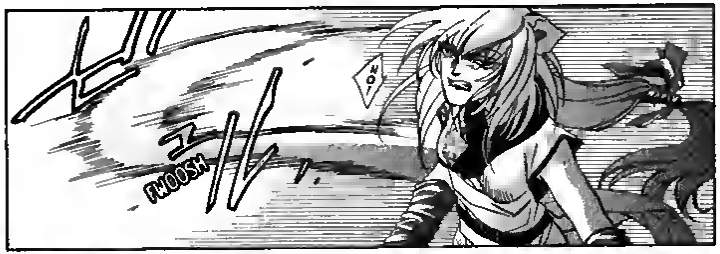
HEY!

WHY, YES. I'VE PASSED THE TIME INDULGING MY TASTE FOR LIVER WHILE WAITING FOR YOU. TWO BIRD'S WITH ONE STONE, AS THEY SAY.
CHUCKLE

YOU'VE BEEN RAIDING THE VILLAGE AND DEVOURING GIRLS JUST TO DRAW US OUT, HAVEN'T YOU?

THE MOEGI IS FAR TOO PRECIOUS FOR A MERE HUMAN.
THE ONE WHO SHOULD ACQUIRE A HUNDRED AND ONE DEMONIC POWERS IS...
ME!!
FWOOSH!!
FWOOP
GRGH!!
SQUEEZE

ASAGI!
YOU'RE KEEPING ASAGI FROM FIGHTING!
WHAM!
GLARE
flinch
fwoosh
IT'S GONE!
WHOMP
EEEK!
ASAGI, THE SWORD!!


FWOOSH
HOP

GRRARGH!
THUD

PSHIK!
GRAB
GRH
FWIP
WHAT HAPPENED?
ACK!
WHOOSH
ZWOOSH!!
GLARE
WHAT'S GOING ON?

ZWOOM
HYA!
SHWOOM
TAKE THIS!!
AAUGH!
SHLRP
ZWSSH!
VWOOSH
SHNK
YOU IMPUDENT LITTLE--
thmp
LUNGE

HEH. I AIN'T... GONNA DIE... THAT EASILY!
GRIN
YOU...
YOU'RE ALIVE...
HI
GIGGLE
SHIMMER
I WILL MAKE YOU EAT THOSE WORDS... KARININ.

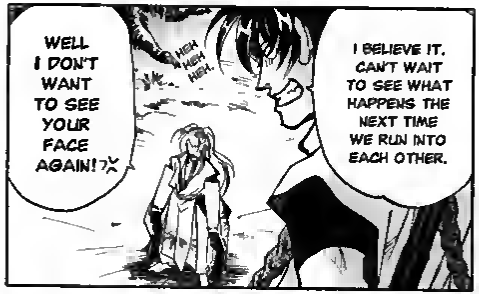
HUH?!
VWOOSH
SKLRSH

WHOOSH
WATCH OUT! THE DEMON ORB!
?!
SHE GOT AWAY.
AWW!
NEXT TIME I SEE HER, I'M GONNA RIP THAT TAIL RIGHT OUT AND MAKE A FUR COAT OUT OF 'ER!
GRR
VWOOM

?!
THWUMP
KA-KLINK
SUOH!!
OH, IS HE DEAD?
DANG IT. I'M PATHETIC. I LET HER GET AWAY.
YOU'RE A KARININ, SO GO AFTER HER!
GO AFTER A DEMON ORB? I'D DO IT IF I COULD FLY.
ANYWAY, YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE ABOUT TO DIE.
what happened?

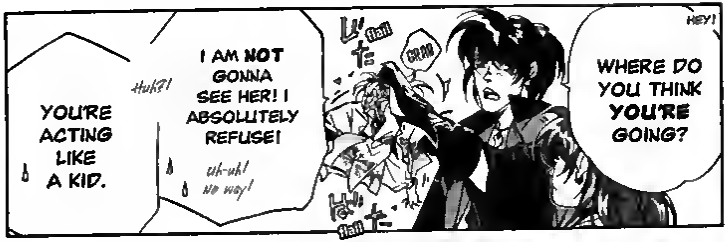
NO. WE MADE A DEAL. I'M NOT GONNA PICK A FIGHT WITH YOU HERE.
WHAT? YOU HAVE SOMETHIN' ELSE TO SAY?!
HE BETTER IN JUST ONE DAY. HEALTHY AS HORSE. MY FREEDOM NOT LAST LONG.
NOW I SLAVE AGAIN.
GOOD THING YOUR MASTER GOT BETTER, HUH?
SCUFF
HEY.
AND?
YOU KNOW, I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID.
WELL, IT JUST DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT.
THE WAY I'VE BEEN JUDGING DEMONS AND ALL,
EVEN I'M NOT SURE IF YOU'RE EVIL OR NOT ANYMORE.
I'LL ONLY GIVE IT TO YOU ON ONE CONDITION, THOUGH.
GRIN
YOU'LL DIE IF WE DON'T DO SOME-THING.
I'm sure of it
BUT,
HMPH
LEAVE ME ALONE. IT'LL TAKE MORE POISON THAN THIS TO GET TO ME.
WELL, WE DO HAVE AN ANTIDOTE.
ALWAYS PREPARE FOR THE WORST.
I'LL HAUNT YOU!
YOU'RE GONNA LEAVE ME LIKE THIS?!
CONDITION?!
THANK YOU FOR SAVING HIM.

CHAPTER 3: SUOH / THE END


WELL I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE AGAIN!
HEH HEH HEH.
I BELIEVE IT. CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS THE NEXT TIME WE RUN INTO EACH OTHER.

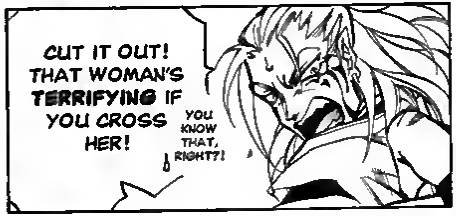
HA HA. I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.
YOU'RE ACTUALLY PRETTY SKILLED. YOU SHOULD BE WORKING MORE, NOT TAKIN' IT EASY.
YOU'RE YOUNG, YOU KNOW.
COME ON.

SWORD BY THE SWORD

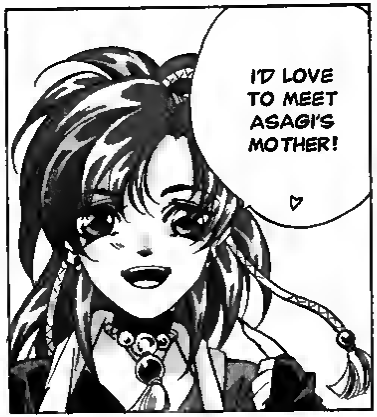

HEY!
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
I AM NOT GONNA SEE HER! I ABSOLUTELY REFUSE!
uh-uh! no way!
YOU'RE ACTING LIKE A KID.
Huh?!
GRAB
GRAB

SO YOU'VE DONE SOMETHING TO MAKE HER MAD, THEN?
HMMM
UGH. I SHOULD'VE KEPT MY MOUTH SHUT

FATHER, YOU'RE ACTING STRANGE.
GLANCE
YOU MUST HAVE A GUILTY CONSCIENCE ABOUT SOMETHING.
Hmmm


CUT IT OUT! THAT WOMAN'S TERRIFYING IF YOU CROSS HER!
YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?!

LET ME GO! CURSE YOU!
LET'S GO.
OKAY, THEN, IT'S DECIDED.
I TOLD YOU, I'M NOT GONNA SEE HER!
AND WE'RE OFF!
AARGH!


I'D LOVE TO MEET ASAGI'S MOTHER!

WHO'S THIS PERSON THAT MIGHT BE ABLE TO TELL US SOMETHING?
SO,

SAIKAI ROAD, CHIKUZEN REGION
ZMNZ4-EN

HUH? YOUR MOM?
MY MOM.

IN OTHER WORDS, YOUR SISTER.
HEH HEH. UNCLE.
THAT MEANS...

WHA?
DASH

SNAP
CRACK
WHOOSH
RRRUMBLE
CRACKLE
AAAUGH!
AAAUGH!

KAEDE!!

IT APPEARS THAT SOME-ONE'S STEPPED INTO MY FORCE FIELD AGAIN.

AH-CHOO!

RUSTLE

I'M COLD, ASAGI.
I CAN SEE MY BREATH.
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, IT IS GETTING RATHER CHILLY.
HEY...

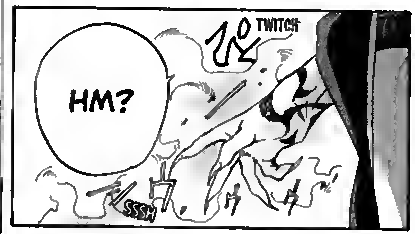
HUH?

SHE'S COMING.

BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

ASAGI?!

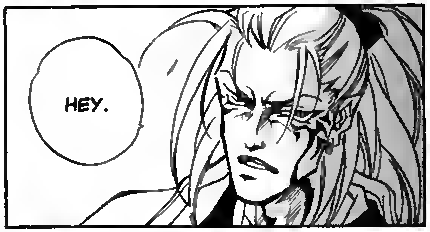
YIKES!
MOM! LOOK, IT'S ME, ASAGI!
DIZZY
WHAT A SHOCK!


TWITCH
HM?
SSSH

Come on!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! YOU ATTACKED US WITHOUT SEEING WHO WE WERE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU COULD GET HURT.
Good grief

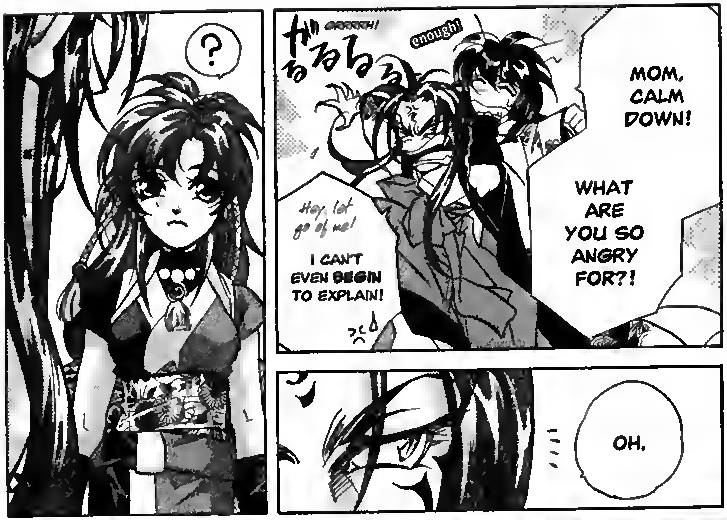
GUESTS?!
I BROUGHT SOME GUESTS.

SO, IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WANTED?
I'M SORRY SOME STRANGE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN WANDERING AROUND HERE LATELY.


HEY.

TWITCH
KURENAI...

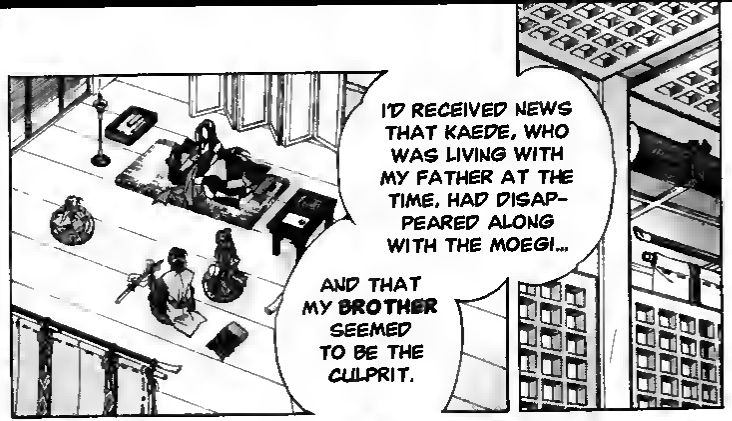
ULP


?
GRRRRR!
enough!
MOM, CALM DOWN!
Hey, let go of me!
I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO EXPLAIN!
WHAT ARE YOU SO ANGRY FOR?!
OH.

OH, HAVE YOU TWO MET?
YES, BUT SHE WAS ONLY A BABY...
YOU'RE KAEDE, AREN'T YOU?

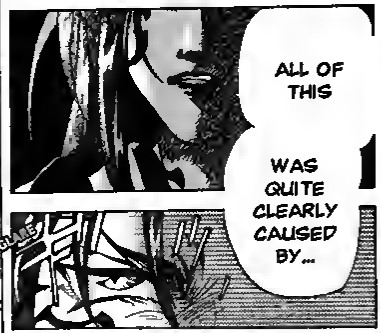
COME HERE. LET ME GET A BETTER LOOK AT YOU.

BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
Hyaaaa!
TSUBAKI, YOU STUPID WENCH!
IS THAT ANY WAY TO GREET YOUR LONG LOST OLDER BROTHER?
Darn!
YOU IDIOT!
DON'T GIVE ME THAT! WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU COULD COME BACK NOW?!
GAAH!!
KRAM!
SMOO

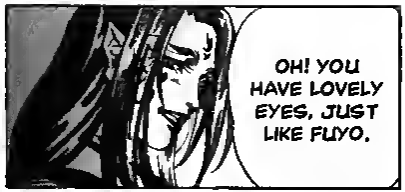

I'D RECEIVED NEWS THAT KAEDE, WHO WAS LIVING WITH MY FATHER AT THE TIME, HAD DISAPPEARED ALONG WITH THE MOEGI...
AND THAT MY BROTHER SEEMED TO BE THE CULPRIT.

KURENAI, IF YOU'D JUST WAITED A LITTLE LONGER, ASAGI WOULD'VE RETURNED AS A KARMIN. IT WAS UTTERLY THOUGHTLESS OF YOU TO TAKE OFF THE WAY YOU DID!
YOU FOOL! HOW COULD YOU EXPECT ME TO WAIT ANY MORE! I'VE BEEN TRAPPED IN THIS MINI-DEMON FORM FOR CLOSE TO A HUNDRED YEARS NOW!
WHO'RE YOU CALLING AN IDIOT?!
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE AN IDIOT!

FATHER ADORED KAEDE, SO NATURALLY IT REALLY HURT HIM.
NO NEED TO CRY, FATHER!
WAAUGH!
KAEDE!

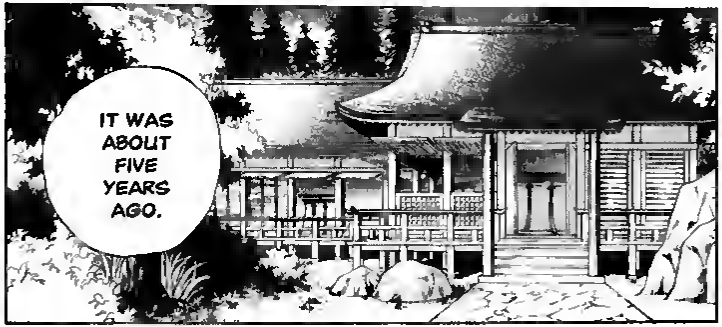

ALL OF THIS
WAS QUITE CLEARLY CAUSED BY...
CLAIRE

WELL, LET'S NOT JUST STAND HERE. COME TO MY HOUSE.


OH! YOU HAVE LOVELY EYES, JUST LIKE FUYO.

OF COURSE.
YOU KNOW MY MOTHER?

What happens if he doesn't dodge.
OKAY, OKAY. JUST DEFROST ME, WILL YOU?
krkk
krkk
krkk
CLIRE
HMPH.
YOU COME TOO, KURENAI. I HAVE A LOT TO SAY TO YOU.


IT WAS ABOUT FIVE YEARS AGO.

IT WAS A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.
ONE DAY, FUYO SUDDENLY PAID ME A VISIT...
TSUBAKI?
TSUBAKI!
FUYO? WHAT'S WRONG?
WHY ARE YOU HERE SO LATE?
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.

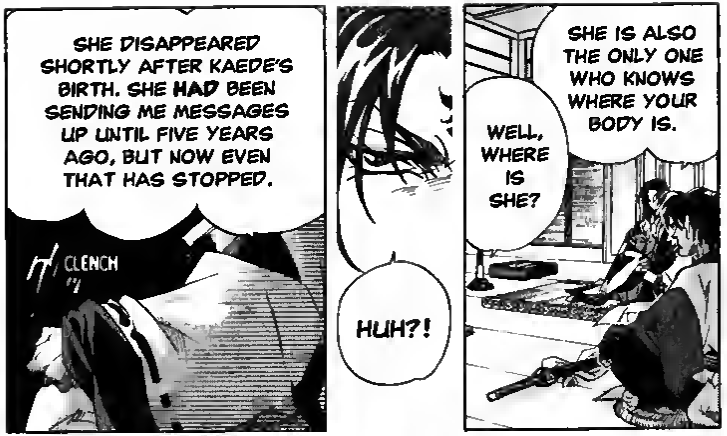
OH SHUT UP! YOU KNOW WHY I COULDN'T WAIT!
THAT'S BECAUSE FUYO HAD ASKED ME NOT TO SAY ANYTHING UNTIL THE RIGHT MOMENT.
FIRST OFF, I DIDN'T FIND OUT YOUR CHILD WAS THE ONE WHO COULD BREAK THE SEAL UNTIL FIVE YEARS AGO! HECK, EVEN ASAGI DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING!
OH, IS THAT SO?

IT WAS BECAUSE FUYO HAD DISAPPEARED!

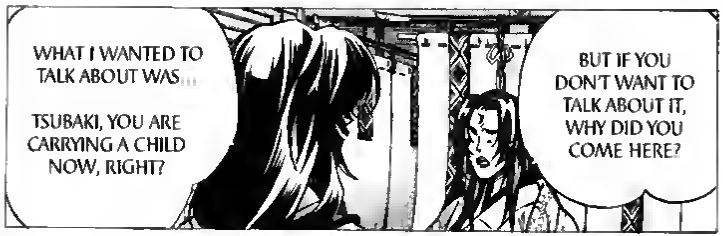
HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED TO MOTHER?
FUYO IS KURENAI'S WIFE, RIGHT?
OOPS!
STARE
SHOOT
BAM!

FUYO AND I WERE GOOD FRIENDS. SHE WAS A SHRINE MAIDEN, SO YOU'D THINK WE DEMONS WOULD DESPISE HER.
BUT SHE WAS A GOOD HUMAN. IT FELT NICE TO BE AROUND HER.
NO... BUT IT SEEMS TO CONTAIN SOME KIND OF DEMONIC AURA.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS, TSUBAKI?
YOU MEAN... THAT LEGENDARY SWORD?!
IT'S A DEMONIC SWORD CALLED THE MOEGI

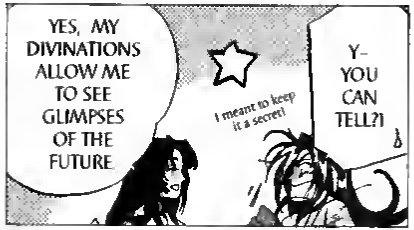
IT WASN'T KURENAI I WAS TRYING TO SEAL. IT WAS THE MOEGI.
YOU FINALLY GOT FED UP WITH HIM?
BUT WHY?! HE'S YOUR HUSBAND!
MY BROTHER?!
YES, THE OTHER DAY, I SEALED KURENAI INTO IT
UNLESS THE SEAL IS BROKEN, THE SWORD CANNOT BE USED
I CANNOT SAY MUCH, BUT THE TRUE PURPOSE OF THE SEAL IS TO PREVENT THIS SWORD FROM BEING TAKEN BY A CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL.
YES, THANK YOU
I DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND, BUT I CAN SEE YOU'D RATHER NOT DISCUSS THIS RIGHT NOW
What an idiot.
I HAVEN'T TOLD HIM ANYTHING.
WHAT DOES KURENAI THINK ABOUT THIS?!
THEY JUST HAD A BIG FIGHT.
HE THINKS HIS FATHER DID IT OUT OF SPITE.

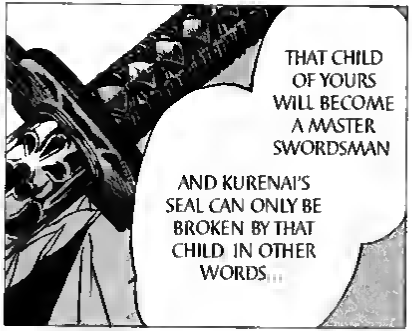

SHE DISAPPEARED SHORTLY AFTER KAEDE'S BIRTH. SHE HAD BEEN SENDING ME MESSAGES UP UNTIL FIVE YEARS AGO, BUT NOW EVEN THAT HAS STOPPED.
CLENCH
HUH?!
WELL, WHERE IS SHE?
SHE IS ALSO THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS WHERE YOUR BODY IS.

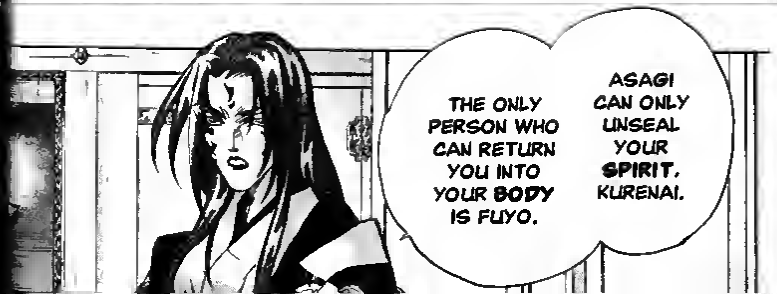
THERE'S NO NEED TO YELL. I WILL SHOW YOU.
SWISH
Y-YOU WILL?
BUT YOU REALLY DO KNOW WHERE FUYO IS, DON'T YOU? SPIT IT OUT, TSUBAKI! WHERE IS SHE?
YOU'RE PRETENDING YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING, JUST LIKE OUR STUPID FATHER DID!


WHAT I WANTED TO TALK ABOUT WAS...
TSUBAKI, YOU ARE CARRYING A CHILD NOW, RIGHT?
BUT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT, WHY DID YOU COME HERE?

ONLY YOUR CHILD CAN DRAW THIS SWORD


YES, MY DIVINATIONS ALLOW ME TO SEE GLIMPSES OF THE FUTURE
I meant to keep it a secret!
Y-YOU CAN TELL?!


THAT CHILD OF YOURS WILL BECOME A MASTER SWORDSMAN
AND KURENAI'S SEAL CAN ONLY BE BROKEN BY THAT CHILD. IN OTHER WORDS...


THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN RETURN YOU INTO YOUR BODY IS FUYO.
ASAGI CAN ONLY UNSEAL YOUR SPIRIT, KURENAI.

I SLIPPED ON SOME-THING.
OOPS... SORRY.
HA HA
I HIT MY HEAD
UGH...
THAT HURT, ASAGI.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT, KURENAI?
SKSH

ICE?!

WHA?

WATCH YOUR STEP.

NO, I'M FINE.
AREN'T YOU COLD?
IT'S FREE-ZING.
ARE YOU OKAY, KAEDE?

THUD
WAAUGH!
AAAOUCH...

OOPS

SLIP
Wa

FUYO...

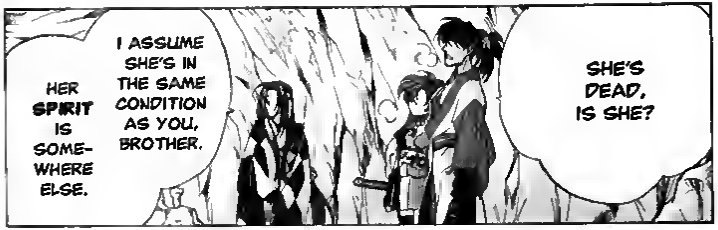
FUYO...

TSUBAKI, PLEASE. COME TO MT. FUJI AND HIDE ME

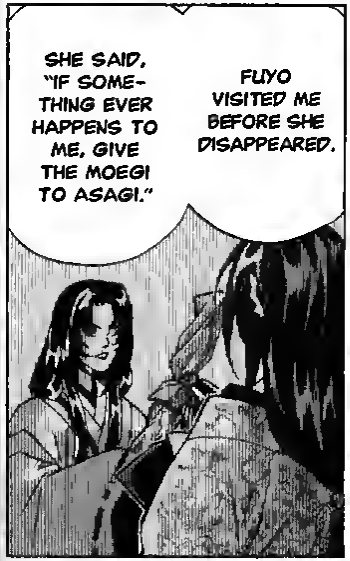
AND FIVE YEARS AGO, RIGHT AFTER KURENAI LEFT...

SHWOO
FUYO SENT HER SHADE TO ME
FUYO?!

BUT IT WAS ONLY HER BODY. HER SPIRIT WAS NOT THERE.
I HEADED TO MT. FUJI IMMEDIATELY AND FOUND FUYO DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS.


HER SPIRIT IS SOMEWHERE ELSE.
I ASSUME SHE'S IN THE SAME CONDITION AS YOU, BROTHER.
SHE'S DEAD, IS SHE?

MOTHER?!


SHE SAID, "IF SOMETHING EVER HAPPENS TO ME, GIVE THE MOEGI TO ASAGI."
FUYO VISITED ME BEFORE SHE DISAPPEARED.

SO THIS IS KURENAI'S WIFE, KAEDE'S MOM...
SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL!

HER BODY WOULD HAVE DECAYED IF IT WAS JUST LEFT HERE...
WHO DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE THE ONE TO FIND HER?
WITHOUT FUYO'S SPIRIT, EVERYTHING REMAINS A MYSTERY.
SO I USED MY MAGIC TO ENCASE HER IN ICE.
WELL, KURENAI?

YES. JUST LEAVE HIM ALONE FOR A WHILE. MY BROTHER NEEDS TIME TO THINK THINGS OVER.
DO YOU THINK HE'LL BE OKAY ALL BY HIMSELF?
KAEDE, YOU MUST BE TIRED.
WHY DON'T YOU LIE DOWN? ASAGI, MAKE SURE YOU LOOK AFTER HER.
OKAY.
WHAT'S WRONG, KAEDE? YOU'RE SO QUIET.

I CAN'T STAND IT WHEN SHE GETS THAT LOOK ON HER FACE.
KAEDE...

IT'LL BE ALRIGHT. ONCE SHE'S BACK TO NORMAL, SHE'LL SEE YOU AND TALK TO YOU. BUT UNTIL THEN, I'LL STAY WITH YOU IF YOU GET LONELY. SO STOP CRYING, OKAY?

COME ON. SHOW ME A SMILE.

OKAY!

IS THAT WHAT YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT?
REALLY?

WILL MY MOTHER COME BACK TO LIFE?
CREAK

SHE'LL BE FINE ONCE HER SPIRIT COMES BACK.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN HER... BUT SHE'S TRAPPED IN ICE.

SHE CAN'T SEE ME, OR SAY ANYTHING TO ME!

FUYO!
SMILE
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? FUYO! WAIT!
I'M COMING.
HEY, REN, I FOUND IT. OVER HERE.

YUP. THIS LOOKS LIKE IT.
WE FINALLY FOUND IT.

WHAT'S THIS? A DEMONIC AURA?!

ASAGI?
IT'S COMING FROM THAT CAVE WE WERE IN.

FUYO.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

COME FIND ME, OKAY?
KURENAI...
ZUUU

GLARE
ANSWER ME!
FLINCH
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
HUH? WHO ARE YOU?
KURENAI! I CAN SENSE A DEMON IN HERE SOMEWHERE.
scuff
GH..
STAY OUT OF OUR WAY, YOU MIDGET!
SHUT UP! WE'RE HERE FOR THE WOMAN IN THAT ICE.

Hah
LET'S FINISH 'EM UP BY EATING THEIR LIVERS OR SOMETHIN'
WHO ARE YOU GUYS?
HEY, THERE'S TWO MORE OF THEM.
BIG DEAL. IT'S ONLY THREE HUMANS.
And they're just kids
YOUR TASTE IN FOOD'S AWFUL.
GRK
I DON'T REALLY GET WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, BUT IF YOU GUYS THINK YOU'RE GONNA EAT US...
YOU'RE DEAD WRONG!
GLARE

HUH?!
ASAGI! STAND BACK!
BWOOSH
WAUGH!
GWOMP!
AAARGH!!

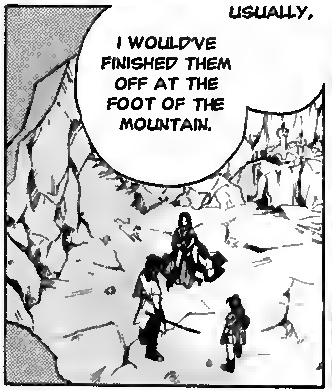
WHOOSH
THUSH
DASH
COME ON, YOU BASTARDS!

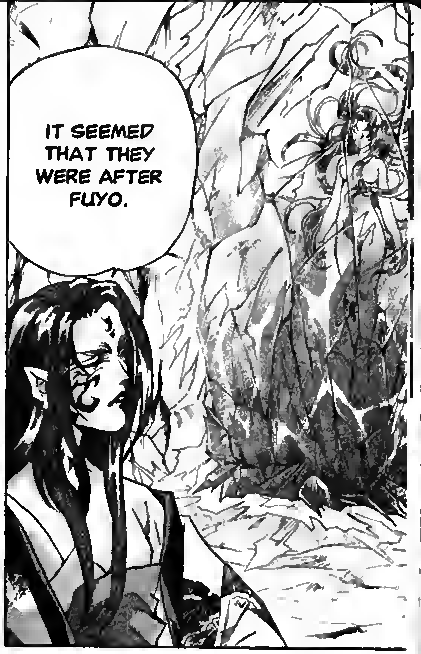
M-MY DEMON ORB?! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO--
CLENCH
KSSSHH
YOU WANNA BE NEXT?
FWMSSH
CHOMP

BLGRGH!
THWUD!
DASH
SHARP!

RATHER LACKING AS OPPONENTS, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
MOM.
WHO WERE THOSE GUYS?
I INTENDED TO CAPTURE HIM.
STILL. I LET ONE ESCAPE. I MUST BE OUT OF PRACTICE.
THEY HAVE BEEN SPENDING A LOT OF TIME HERE RECENTLY.

I'LL REMEMBER THIS!
VWOOSH
GLARE
SCUFF
SHOOT.
I'M GLAD IT WENT EASY, BUT STILL...
AW, YOU DIDN'T LEAVE ME ANYTHING.
HOW COME?

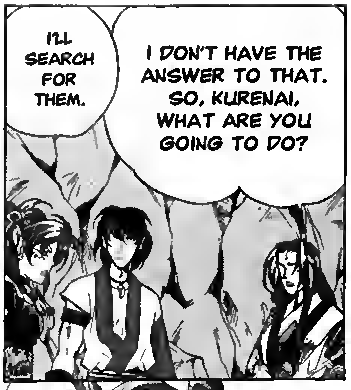

USUALLY,
I WOULD'VE FINISHED THEM OFF AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN.


IT SEEMED THAT THEY WERE AFTER FUYO.

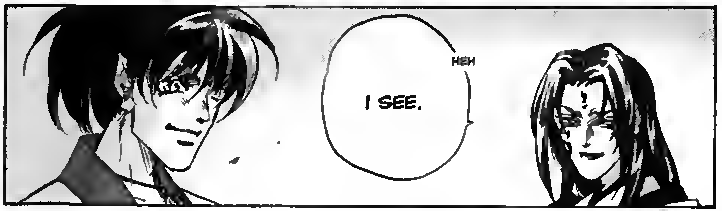
I SEE. SO THEY MUST HAVE WANDERED IN WHEN WE WENT THROUGH THE FORCE FIELD.
SO IT WOULD SEEM.

WHO ARE THEY WORKING FOR?
...!
IS THAT KURENAI SPEAKING NOW? HOW CONFUSING.

I'LL FIND MY BODY AND THAT WEAKLING THAT GOT AWAY. EVEN IF IT MEANS LEAVING NO STONE UNTURNED. I'LL FIND SOME CLUES...


I'LL SEARCH FOR THEM.
I DON'T HAVE THE ANSWER TO THAT. SO, KURENAI, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

AND FIND FUYO. NO MATTER WHAT!

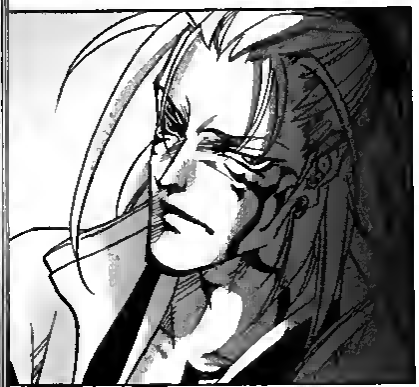

HEH
I SEE.

DO YOU HAVE EVERYTHING?
YEAH.
I think
ARE YOU SURE YOU HAVE TO MOVE?
YES. I MUST TAKE FUYO'S BODY TO A DIFFERENT LOCATION.
M-MY MOTHER?
THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY.
PAT
KAEDE...

I WILL PROTECT HER WITH MY OWN LIFE. SO RELAX.
AND ASAGI...
PHEW
YEAH.
YOU FEEL BETTER NOW?
FUYO CALLED YOU A MASTER SWORDSMAN.
BUT I DON'T THINK THAT'S THE ONLY REASON YOU'RE CARRYING THE MOEGI.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES.
KAEDE, DON'T MAKE YOURSELF SICK FROM OVER-EATING.
WATCH OUT FOR SIGNS OF DANGER ON YOUR WAY.

I'M COUNTING ON YOU.



KURENAI.

I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT... MOM.

LISTEN, ASAGI. YOU MUST FIND OUT WHAT IT IS.

YEAH.
I'LL GIVE IT MY BEST SHOT.

SWORD BY THE 1

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

By The Sword Vol. 01

PG 7 **Moegi**
While *moegi* here is being used as the name of a sword, it is generally used to refer to a yellowish-green color

PG 14 **Karinin**
While this word literally means "hunting person," it was decided to keep it as-is rather than render it as "hunter," as the prey of *karinin* are traditionally *yokai* rather than, say, deer and the like (with which the word "hunter" and its Japanese equivalents are associated)

PG 49 **Japan**
The two *kanji* characters comprising "Japan" are separated here and conjoined by the possessive *no* to go from being *nihon* ("Japan") to *hi no moto*, or "source of the sun," from which the name for Japan originated.

PG 49 **Kappa**
Kappa are water imps said to inhabit rivers and ponds. They've been known to do everything from pulling silly pranks to raping women and eating human livers, but they can also do some good (such as teaching humans medical skills).

They are usually portrayed as something like a tortoise standing on two feet, with a hollow basin of water on the top of its head, rimmed with bushy hair. It's thought that if the water pours out, the *kappa* will weaken. They're said to consume all sorts of creatures, including horses, cows and especially cucumber—which is how the dish *kappa maki* (sushi rolls filled with cucumber) got its name.

While the *kappa* is a traditional Japanese *yokai*, some believe its appearance was influenced by that of Portuguese monks, who had similar hairstyles, as well as robes (the hoods for which lay flat on their back, somewhat like a tortoise shell) called *capa*.

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Sincerely,

Javier Lopez
Lead Translator

Kay Bertrand

Brendan Frayne

Amy Forsyth

THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES IN

SWORD BY THE ①

Asagi, Koede and the famed Moegi have traveled far, but the journey to fulfill Asagi's promise is nowhere close to over for the Demon Hunter. The daughter of a werewolf clan's king makes a surprising new friend for the wanderers, and strange encounters in the wilds keep them from their ultimate mission. With this wealth of distractions, the spirit of Kurenai grows restless, not only for his freedom, but also for an awaited reunion with his long-lost wife in *By The Sword* Volume 2.

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EDITOR'S PICKS

IF YOU LIKED *BY THE SWORD* VOLUME 1, THEN YOU'LL LOVE THESE!

PICK 1

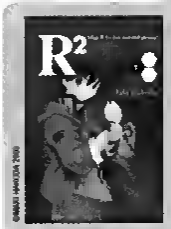
PEACEMAKER KUROGANE

Tetsunosuke Ichimura has finally joined the ranks of the Shinsengumi, feudal Kyoto's samurai police. As a page for Vice-Commander Hijikata, he has been made privy to both Japan's highest ranking officials and their secrets! With this responsibility comes the all important duty of protection, and when a certain enemy threatens the city, the Shinsengumi—and Tetsunosuke—draw their swords, swiftly serving up justice as the dueling protectors of the embattled imperial capital.

PICK 2

DESERT CORAL

Naoto Saki has an imagination so far-reaching that he has found an entire world within his dreams, filled with fascinating creatures and longstanding rivalries. After days and nights of escaping reality, he is summoned to this illusory land and into a battle between the Elphis and the Sand Dusts. Pain is real here, but the risk of certain injury and even death will not stave his eventual attachment to this world of fantasy. Naoto will ultimately be faced with a decision that will forever change him and the fate of *Desert Coral*.



PICK 3

A²

Life for Kenta Akagi is safe, stable and altogether uneventful. Born and raised in the remote city of Lutzheim, he can only wonder what strange and wonderful creatures exist, or how battles are fought and won. A life of excitement is unknown to young Kenta, until he is whisked away to a foreign land. He becomes a warrior, fighting for possession of a girl, but he doesn't know who or what this girl is. He only senses that he must protect her, even if it causes more destruction than peace...

THE JOURNEY OF THE MOEGI CONTINUES IN *BY THE SWORD* VOLUME TWO COMING SOON FROM ADV MANGA!

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